

Arrowsmith™

SO SMART IN
THEIR FINE
UNIFORMS



KURT BUSIEK & CARLOS PACHECO

Jesús MERINO • Alex SINCLAIR • COMICRAFT





A New Map
of
Europe



ATLANTIC OCEAN





Arrowsmith™

SO SMART IN THEIR
FINE UNIFORMS

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The Sound
of Distant
Guns

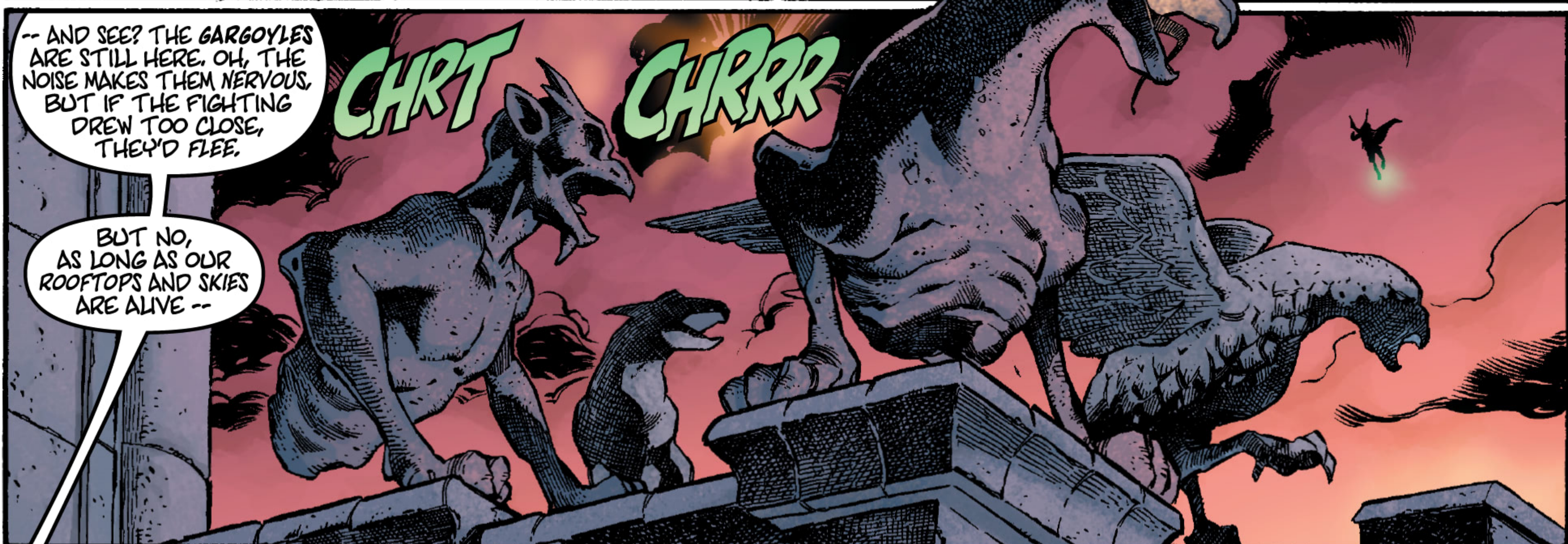
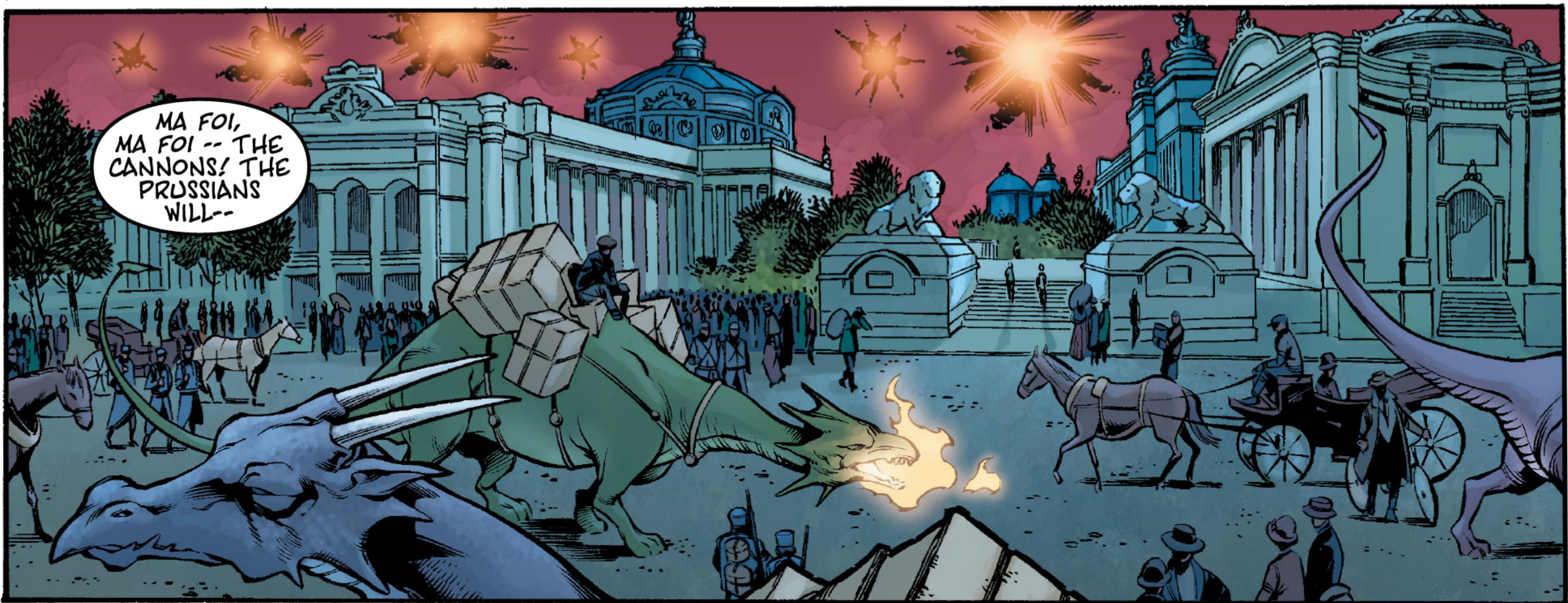


A PRELUDE



It has been more
than eleven centuries
since The Peace of
Charlemagne changed
the world forever.

But now, Europe burns...

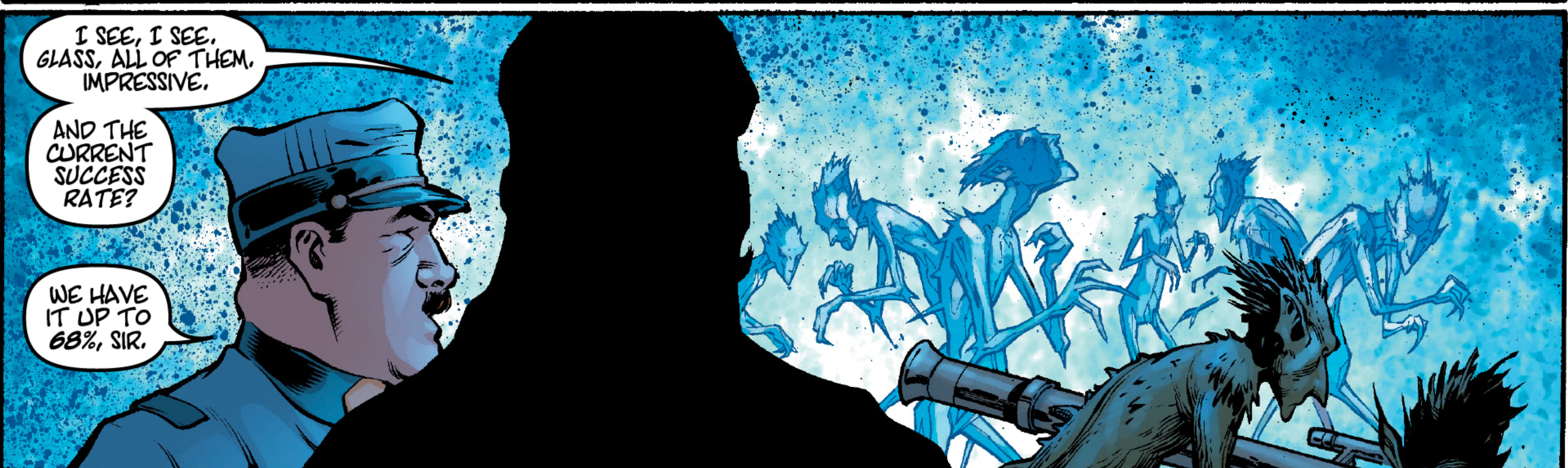
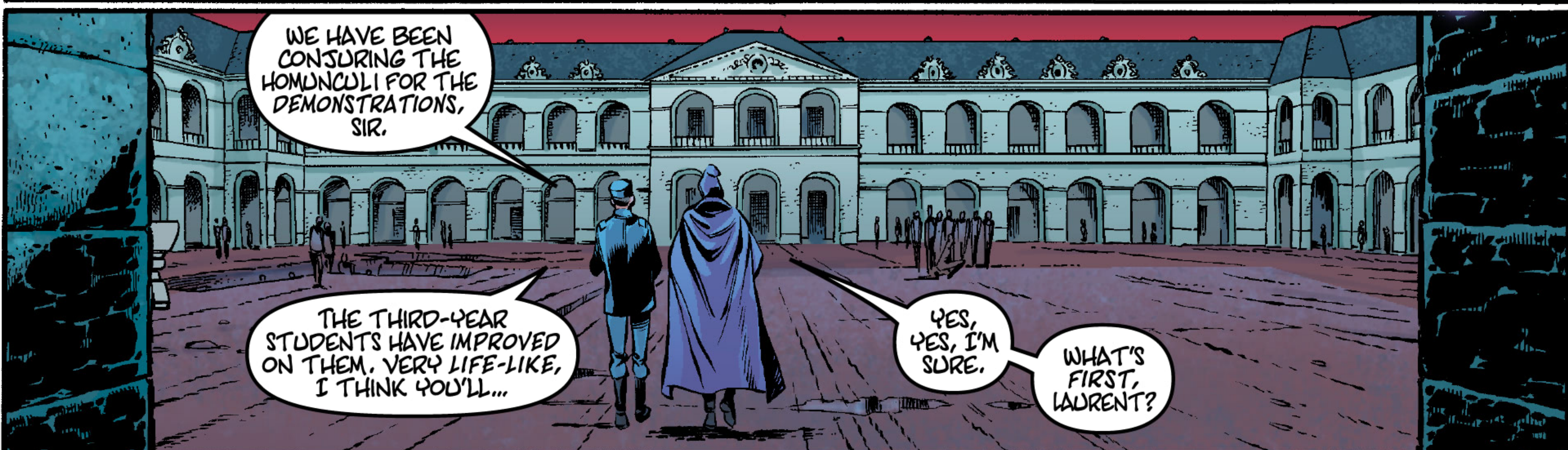


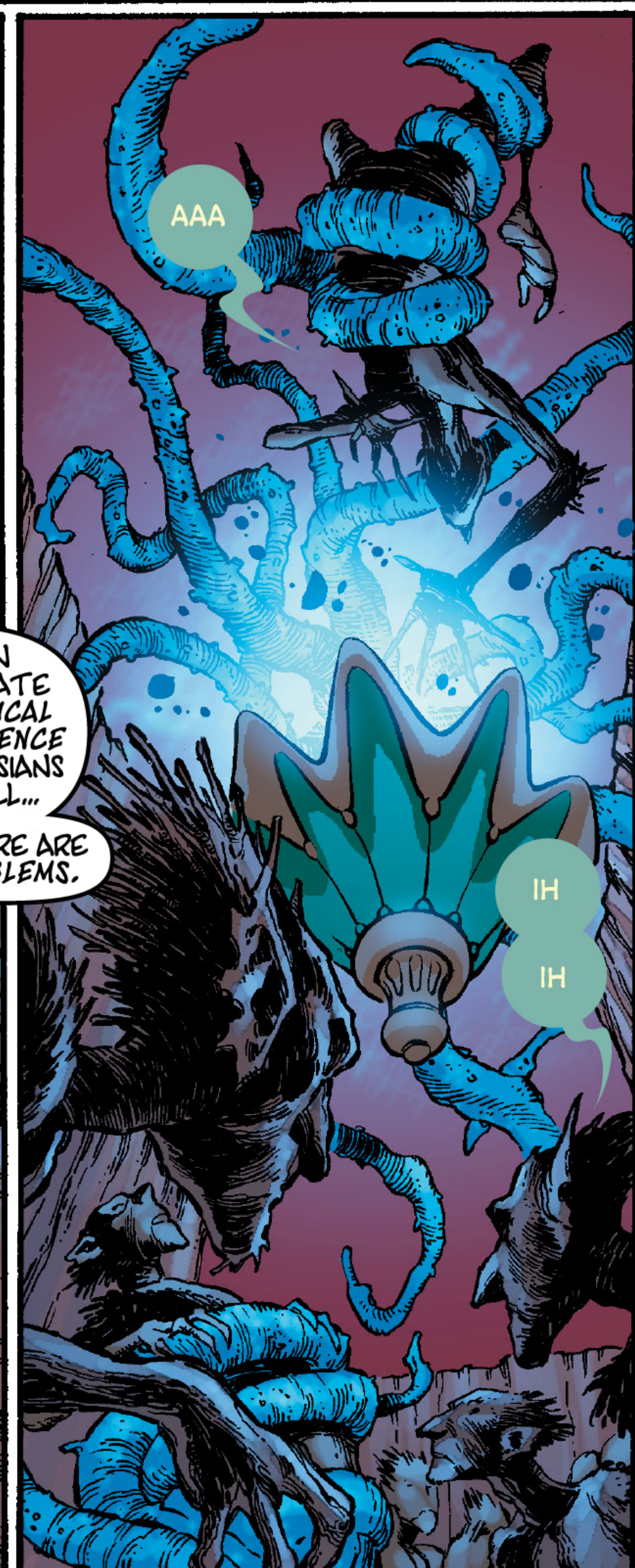
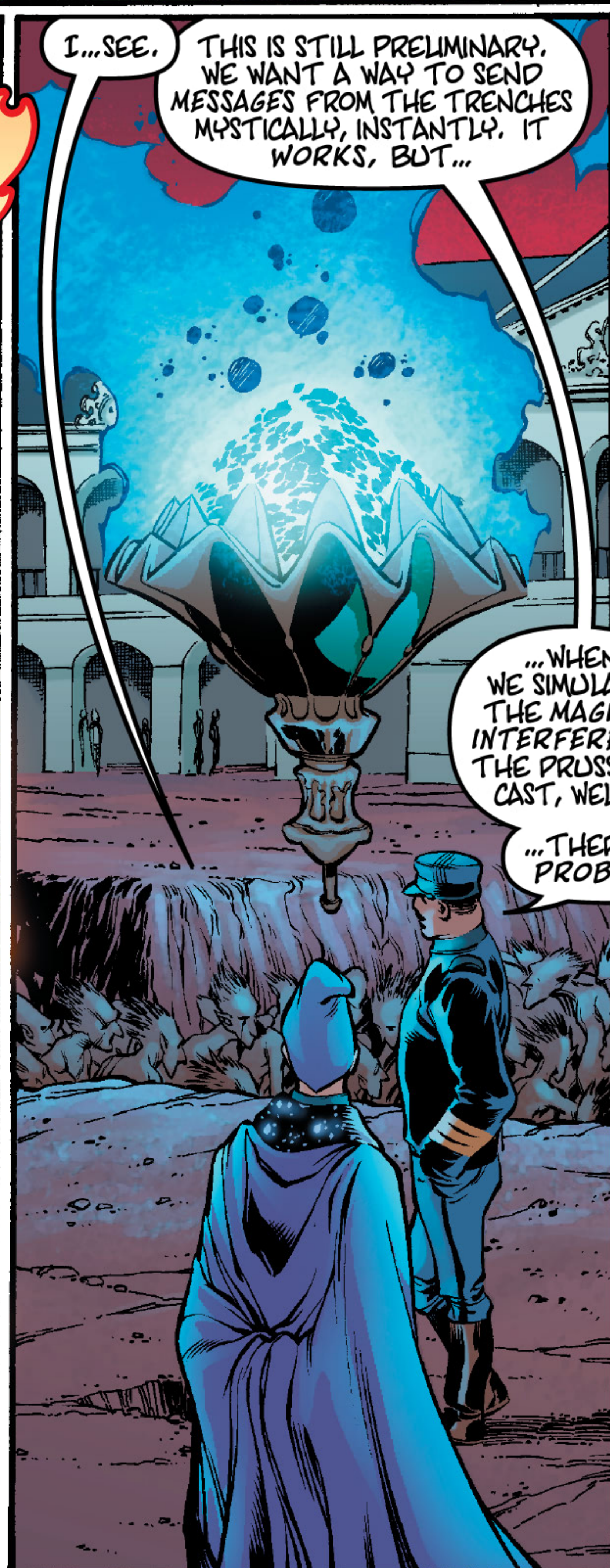
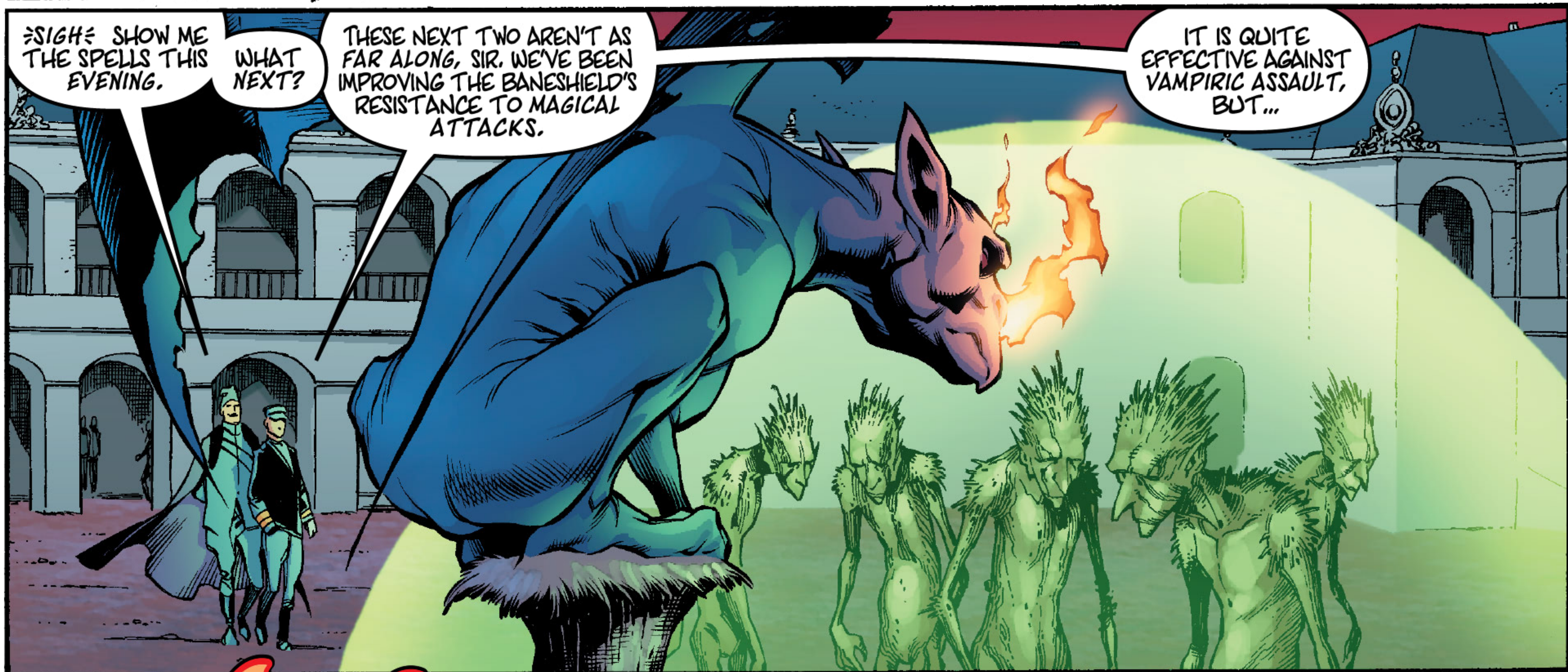


-- YOU MAY TRUST THAT PARIS IS STILL FREE!



ORDERLY!
CONFOUND IT -- LAURENT! WHERE IS THAT USELESS...?



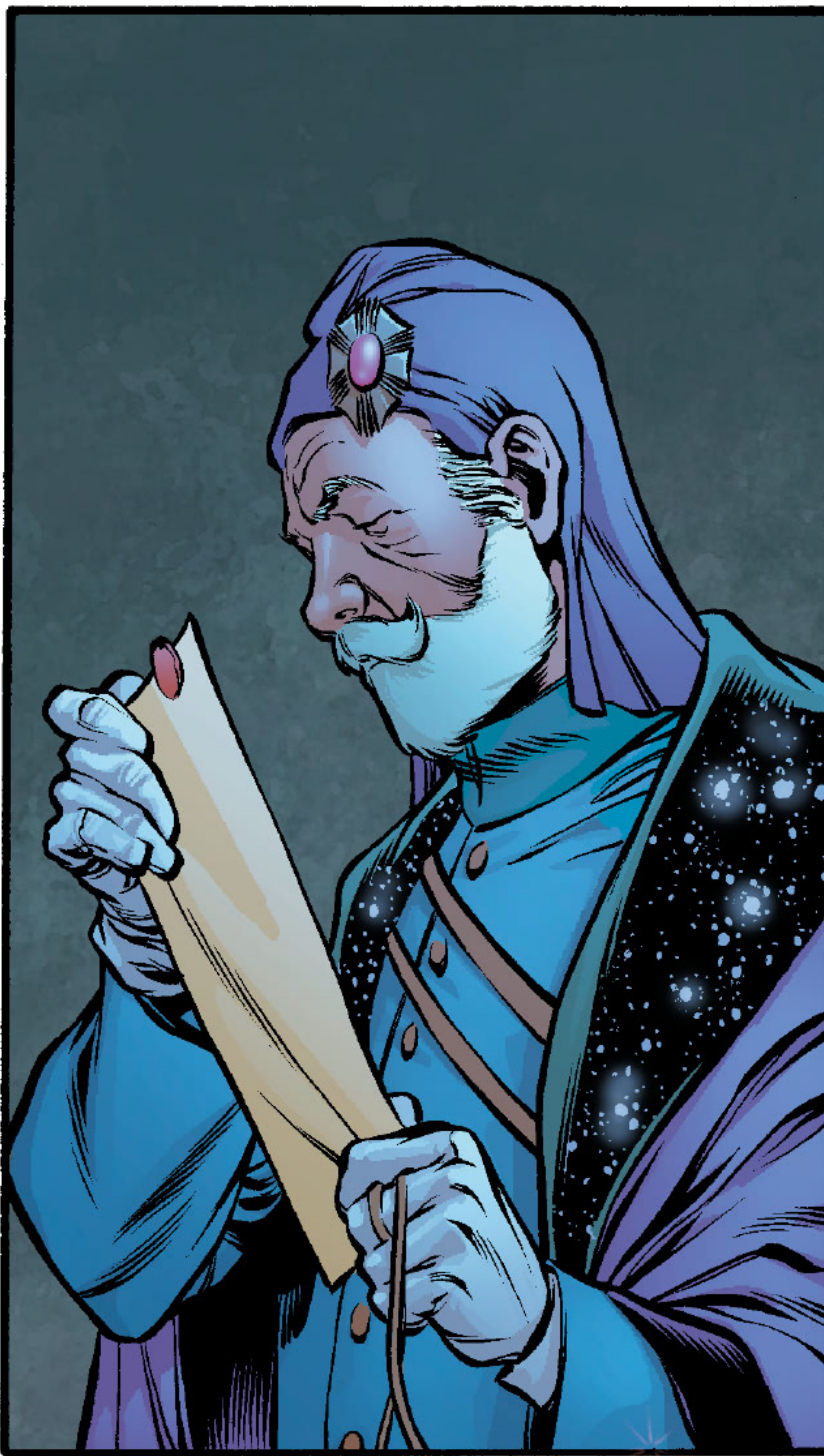




EXCUSE ME, MAGISTER!

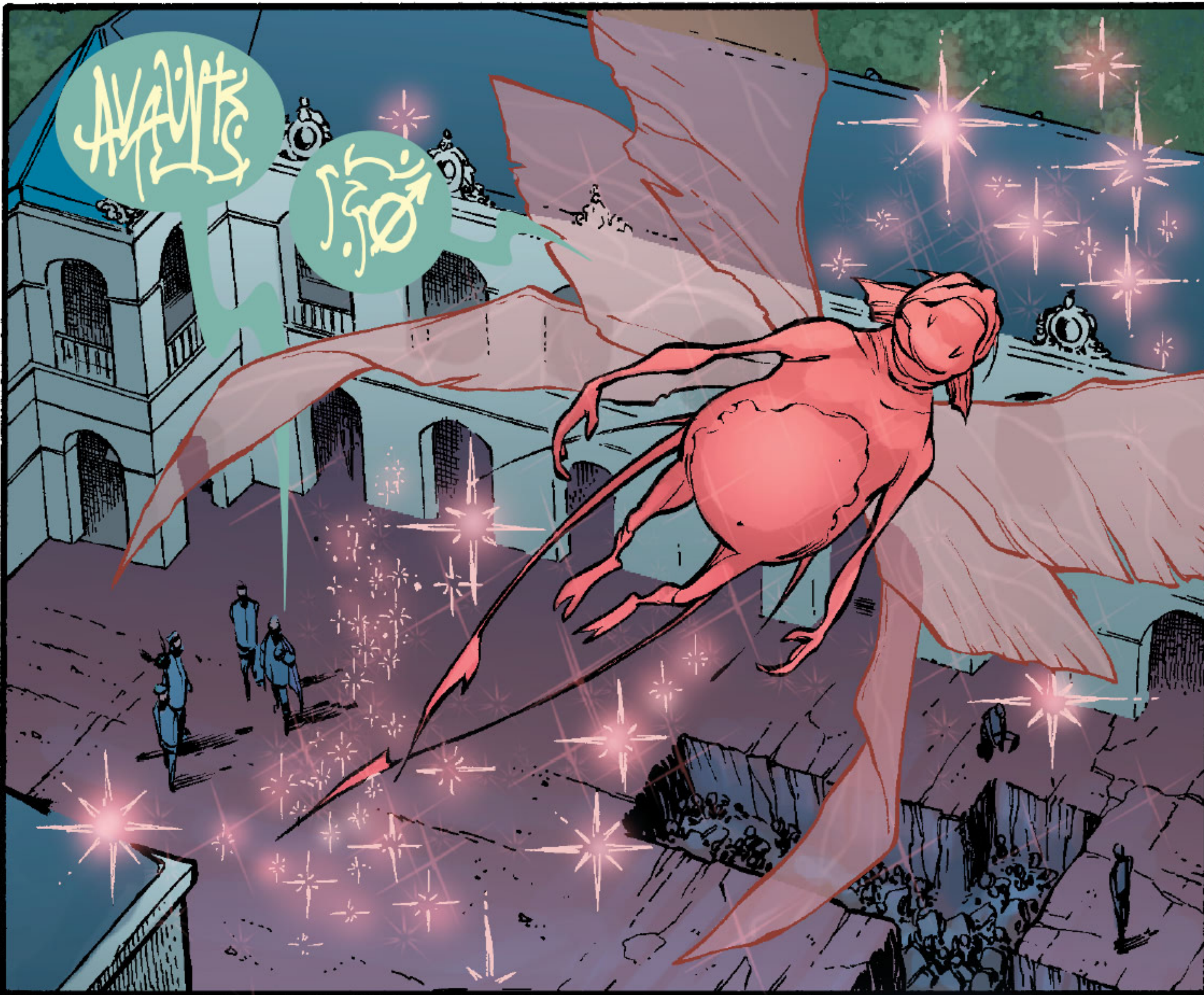
URGENT MESSAGE FROM THE MARSHALL'S OFFICE. JUST NOW ARRIVED, SIR.

HMP. WELL, IT CAN'T BE WORSE THAN THIS FARCE. HAND IT OVER, HAND IT OVER.



DIABLE! PAR LES SEPT DIABLES!

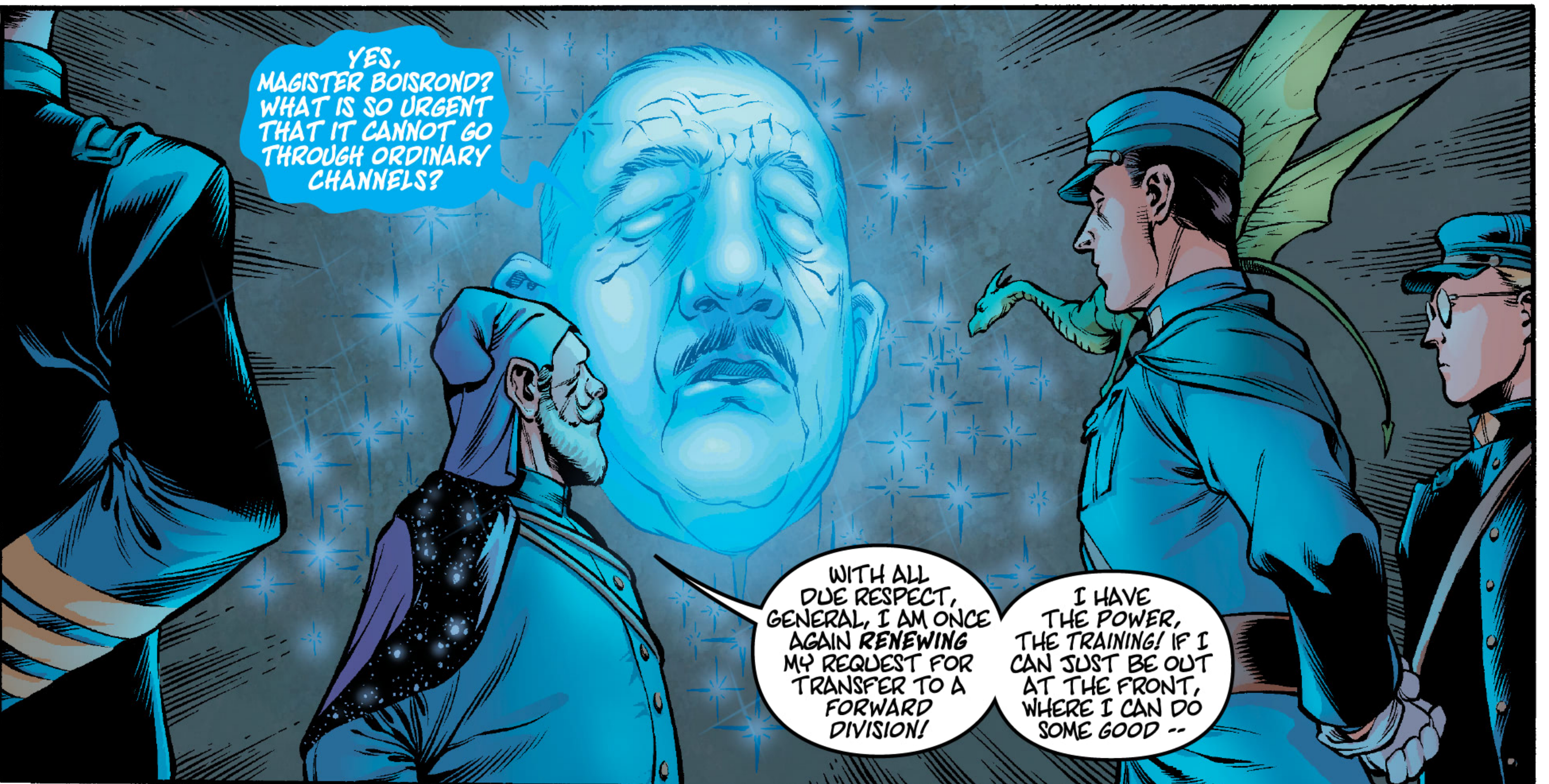
THIS IS INTOLERABLE! INTOLERABLE!



AH...AND WILL THERE BE A REPLY?

I HAVE JUST SENT IT.

I SHOULD HEAR FROM THE RECIPIENT MOMENTAR--



YES, MAGISTER BOISROND? WHAT IS SO URGENT THAT IT CANNOT GO THROUGH ORDINARY CHANNELS?

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, GENERAL, I AM ONCE AGAIN RENEWING MY REQUEST FOR TRANSFER TO A FORWARD DIVISION!

I HAVE THE POWER, THE TRAINING! IF I CAN JUST BE OUT AT THE FRONT, WHERE I CAN DO SOME GOOD --



YOUR REQUEST IS DENIED, HENRI.

YOU KNOW THAT SENIOR WIZARDS CANNOT BE RISKED IN COMBAT. WE HAVE TOO FEW, AND LOSING JUST ONE COULD TIP THE BALANCE OF THE WAR.



AND THAT'S IT?! THAT'S ALL?

INSTEAD OF DOING SOMETHING WORTHWHILE, I SIT HERE, ENCHANTING MORE ORICHALC CHIPS TO REPLACE MORE DEAD FLIERS --

-- I WORK ON LUNATIC WEAPONS THAT ARE PUT INTO PRODUCTION BEFORE THEY EVEN WORK DEPENDABLY --

IT IS THE ONLY WAY, HENRI...



IT IS **MADNESS!**
SHEER MADNESS!

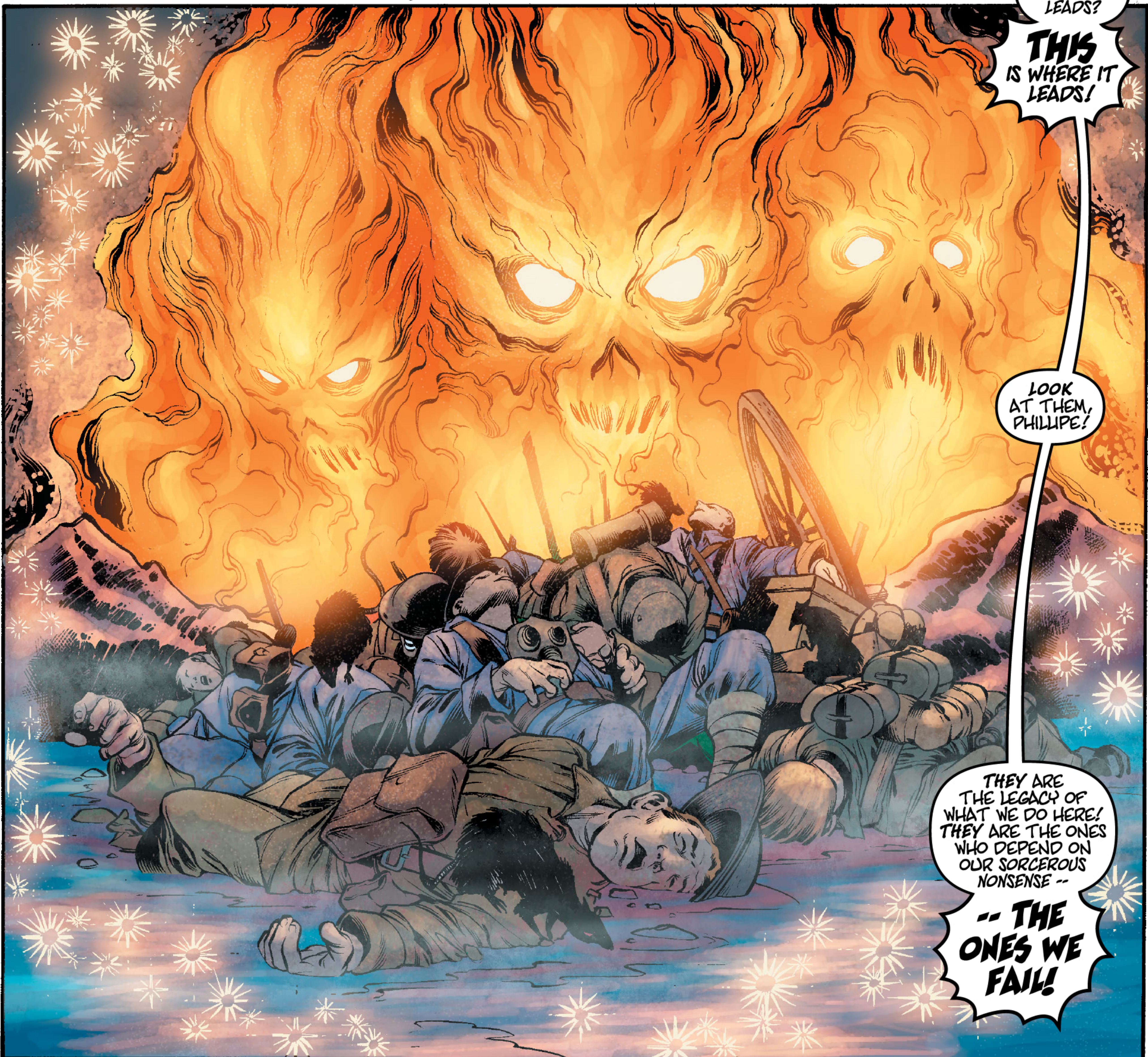
YOU WANT TO KNOW WHERE THIS LEADS?

THIS
IS WHERE IT LEADS!

LOOK AT THEM, PHILLIPE!

THEY ARE THE LEGACY OF WHAT WE DO HERE! THEY ARE THE ONES WHO DEPEND ON OUR SORCEROUS NONSENSE --

-- **THE ONES WE FAIL!**





I KNOW,
BUT YOU STILL
CANNOT BE
RISKED.

AND THE
ENEMY IS IN THE
SAME STRAITS,
AFTER ALL.

PLUS, YOU HAVE
COME UP WITH QUITE A
BIT OF NEW TECHNOLOGY --
MASS-MANUFACTURED SPELLS,
NEW APPLICATIONS --



AND WHO
WILL USE THEM,
PHILLIPE?

WHEN THE FLOWER OF GALLIC YOUTH
LIES DEAD IN THE MUD, WITH A
GENERATION OF LOTHARINGIANS AND
ALBIONESE NEXT TO THEM, WHO
WILL YOU SEND?

WHO WILL BE
HANDED A FEW
FAULTY WEAPONS,
SOME CHARMS AND
TRINKETS, AND
SENT TO DIE
NEXT?

WHO?
WHO?!

HEY! NICE
CATCH THERE,
FLETCH!

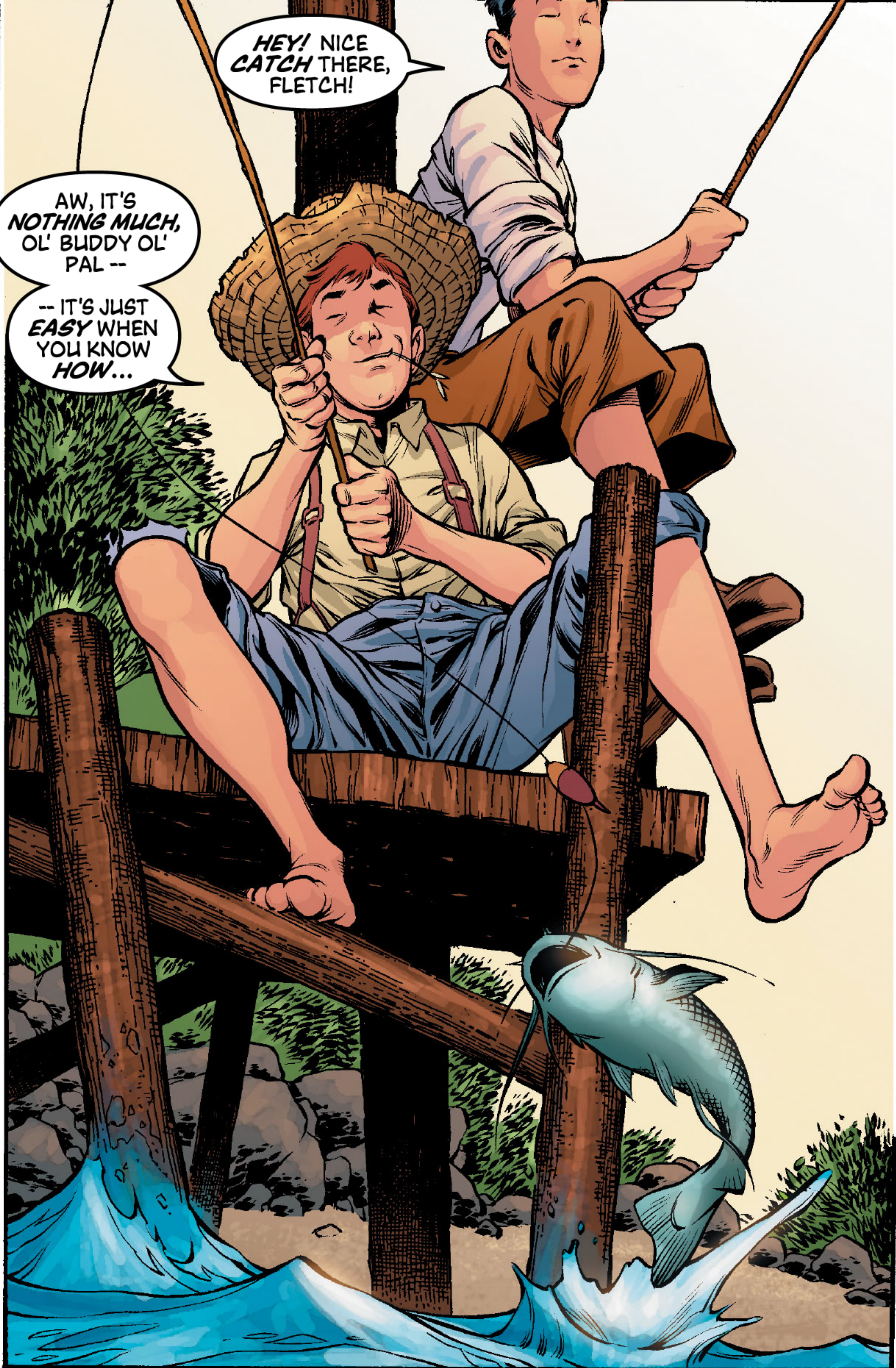
AW, IT'S
NOTHING MUCH,
OL' BUDDY OL'
PAL --

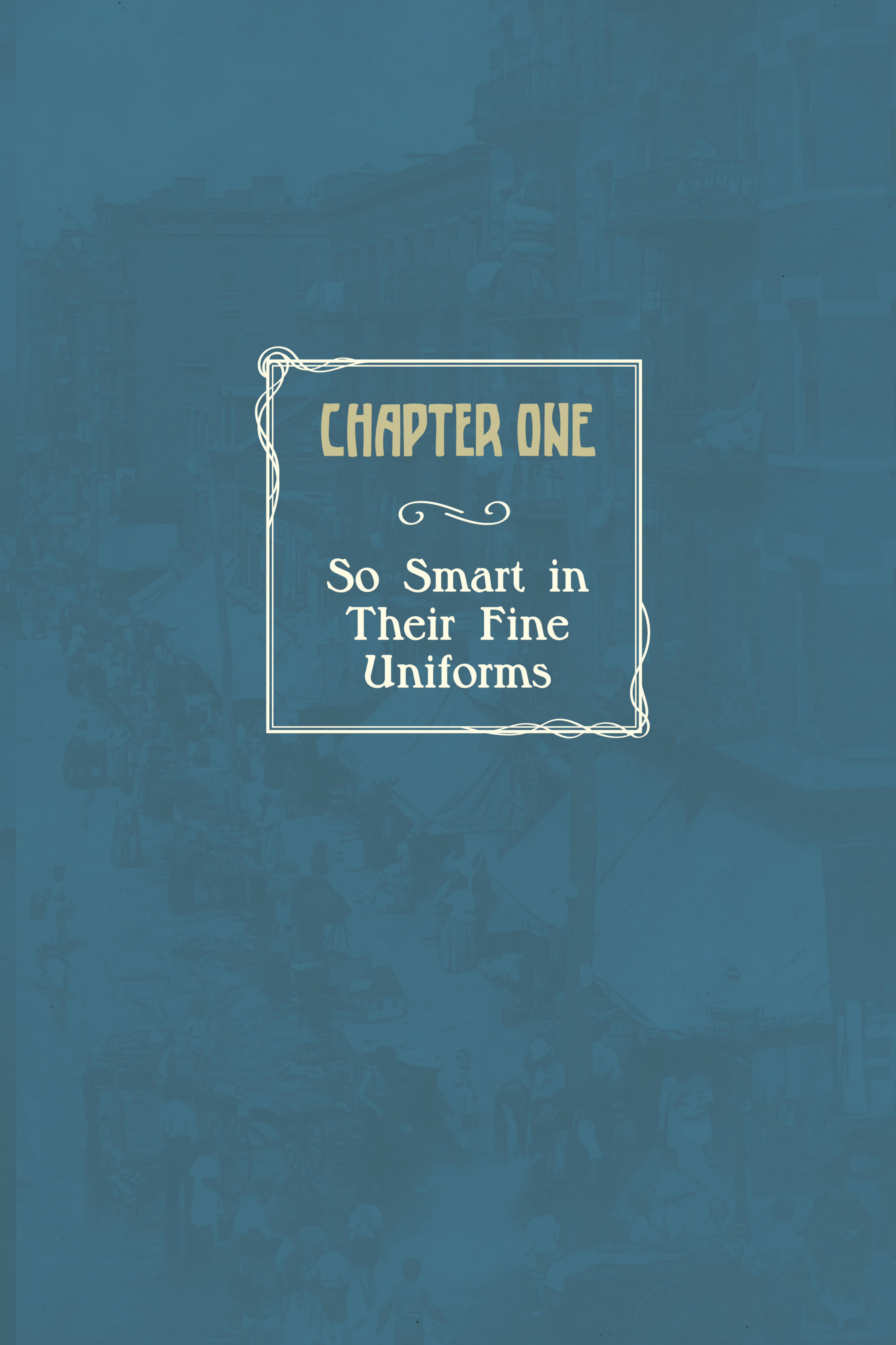
-- IT'S JUST
EASY WHEN
YOU KNOW
HOW...

*Herbertsville,
Connecticut.*

*The shores of
Lake Erie.*

*The United States
of Columbia.*





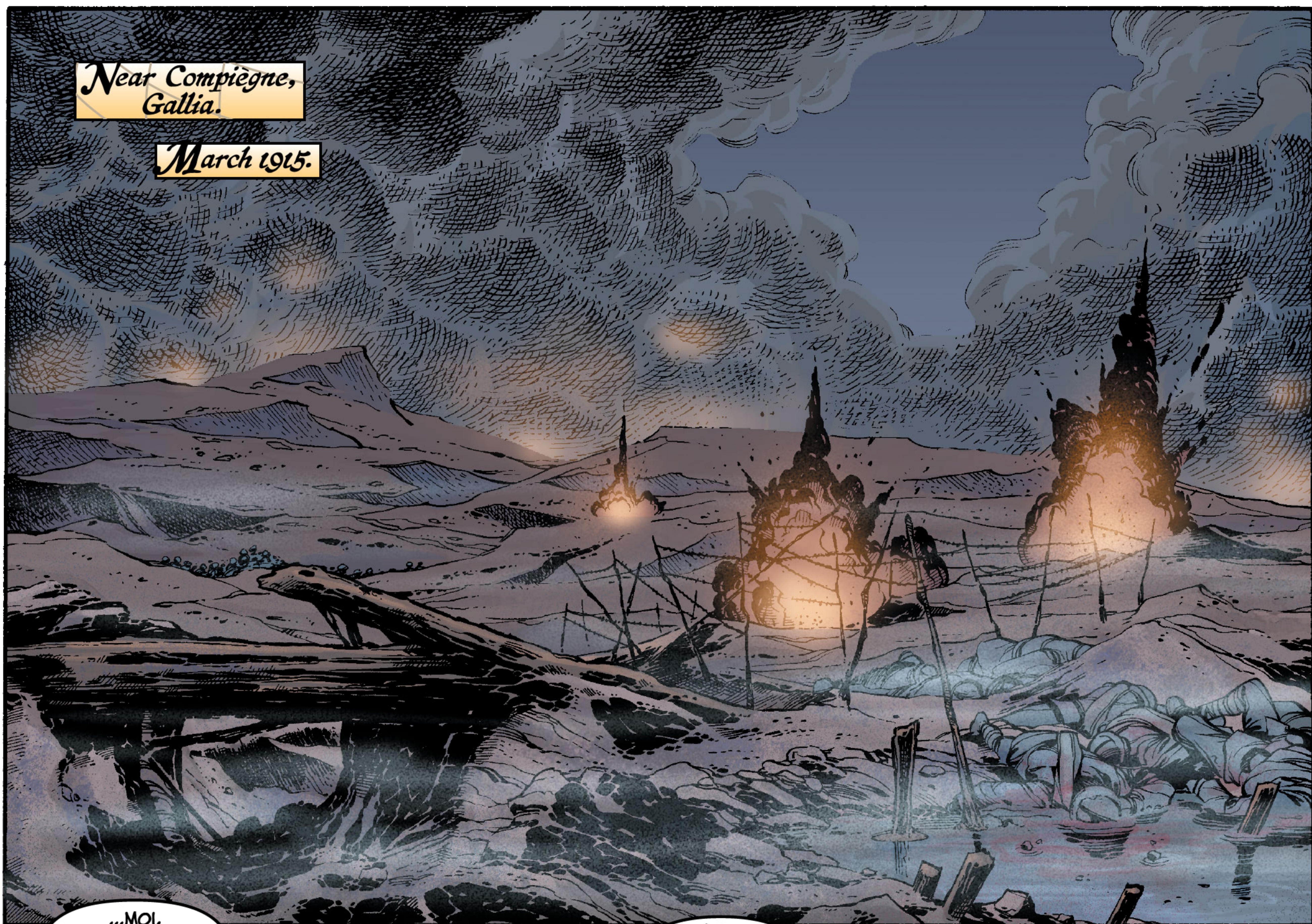
CHAPTER ONE

So Smart in
Their Fine
Uniforms



Near Compiègne,
Gallia.

March 1915.



...MOI,
C'EST LA BOUE.
SI SEULEMENT
J'AVAIS LES PIEDS
AU SEC...

C'EST
PAS LA BOUE,
C'EST LE
FROID.

NON,
NON...CE SONT
LES POUX. LE
RESTE, JE PEUX
SUPPORTER,
MAIS...

VOUS
N'ÊTES QUE
DES IDIOTS.



LE PIRE, C'EST
LES GÉNÉRAUX. ILS
DORMENT AU
CHAUD EUX, AU
SEC, AU PROPRE,
MAIS S'ILS AVAIENT
UN PEU JUGEOTE,
NOUS NE SERIONS
PAS...HM?

PSSST,
RÉMY.



HM?
OH.

OH!

REGARDEZ!
ELLES SONT SI
BELLES, SI
FINES. SI...



QUE SE...?

**DES
ESPRITS?!**

IMBÉCILE!
C'EST LA MAGIE
QUI LES ATTIRE!
S'ILS SONT LÀ C'EST
QUE -- C'EST
QUE --





PRAAAAA



PRAM PAM PRAM PAM

UN MAGE!
IL NOUS FAUT
UN MAGE, ICI!
CONTENEZ-LES --
TENEZ BON LES
GARS --

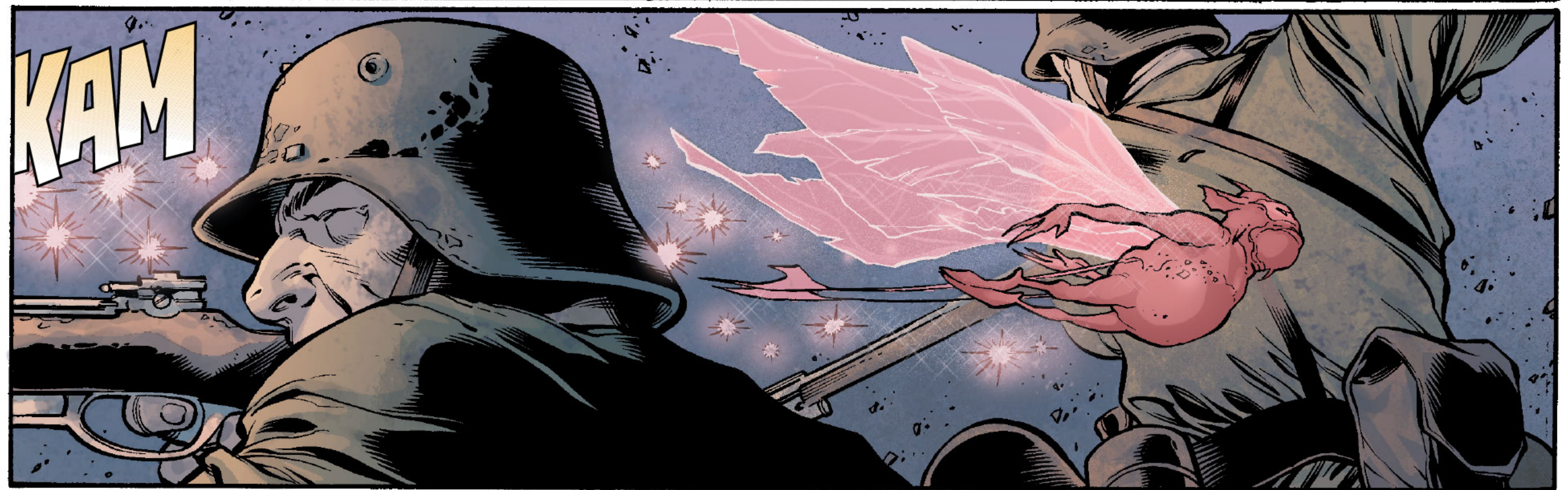
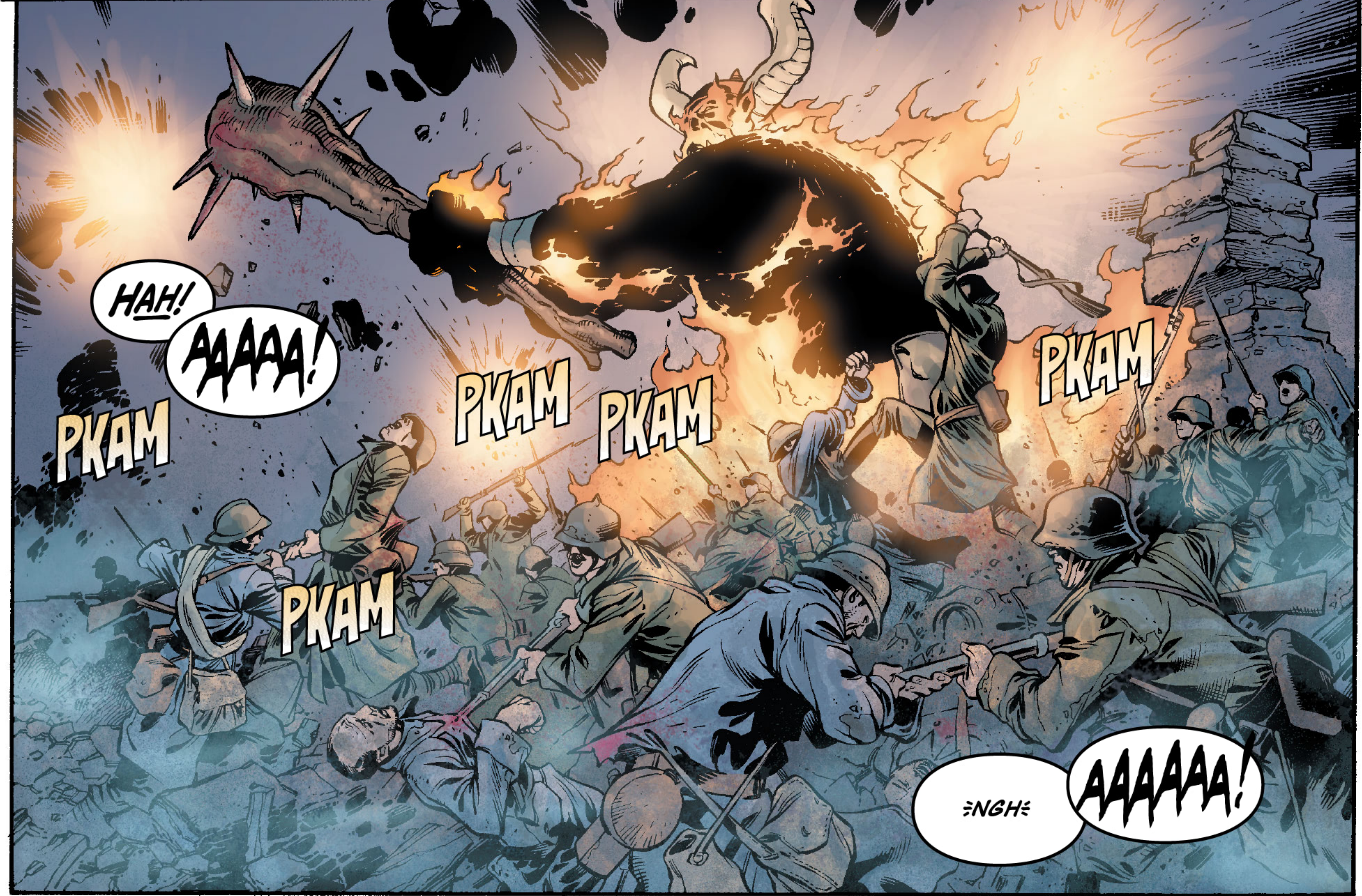
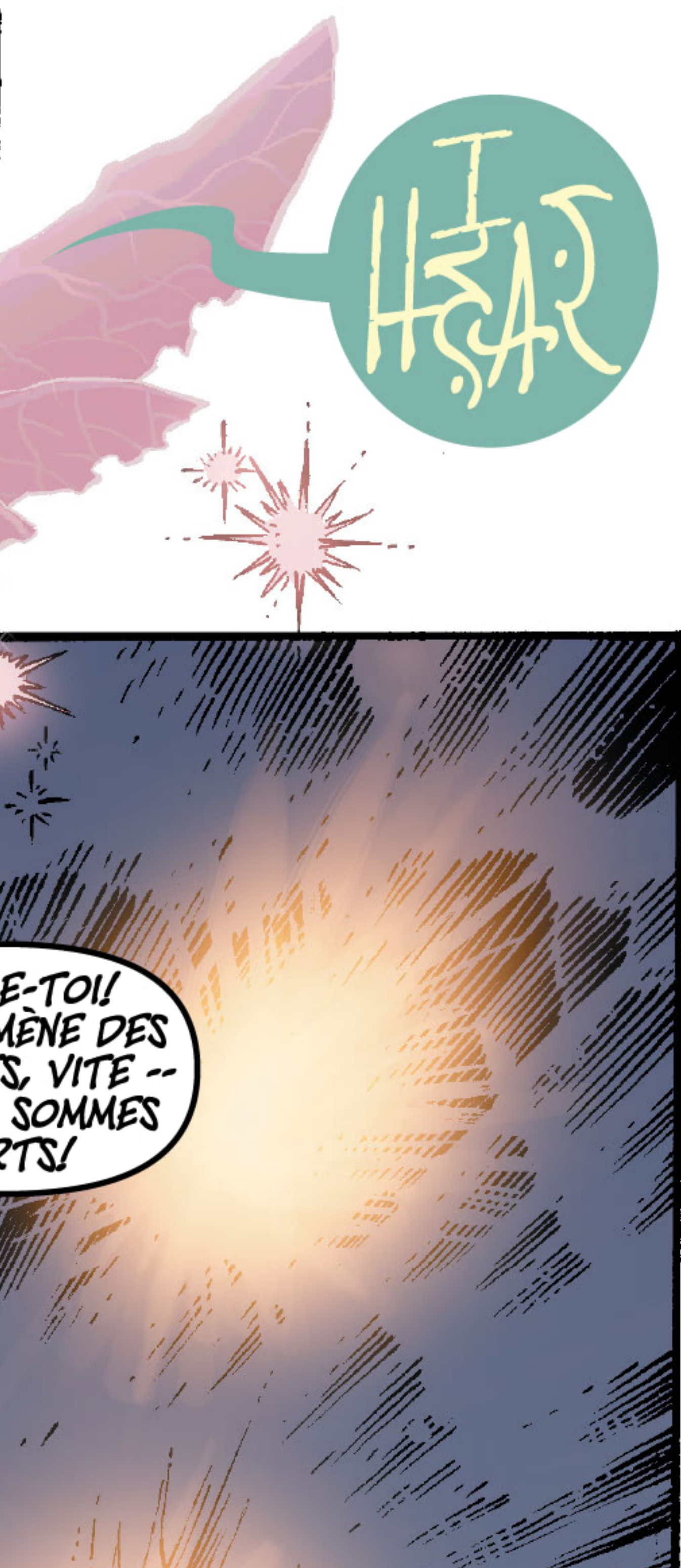
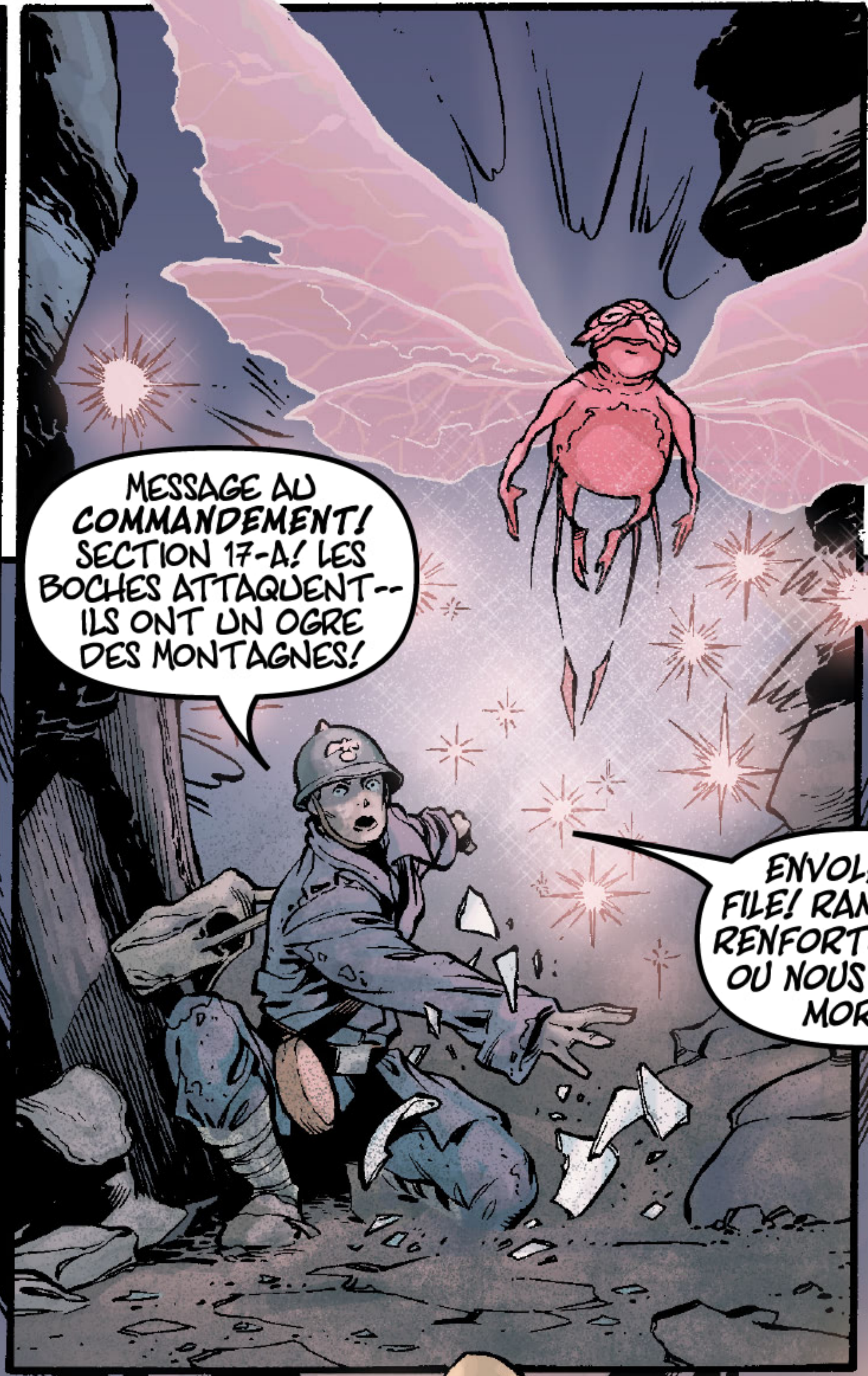
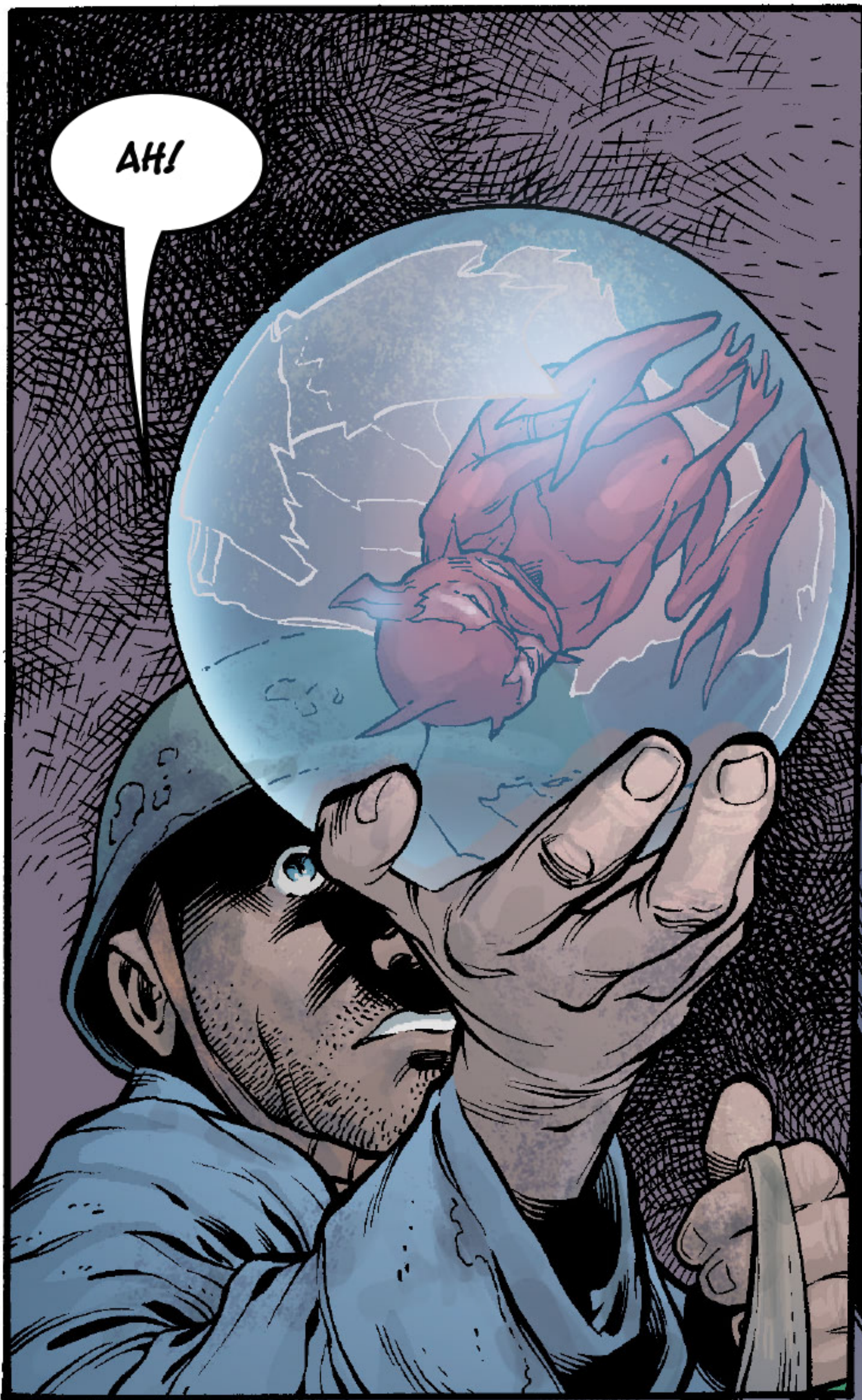
PAM

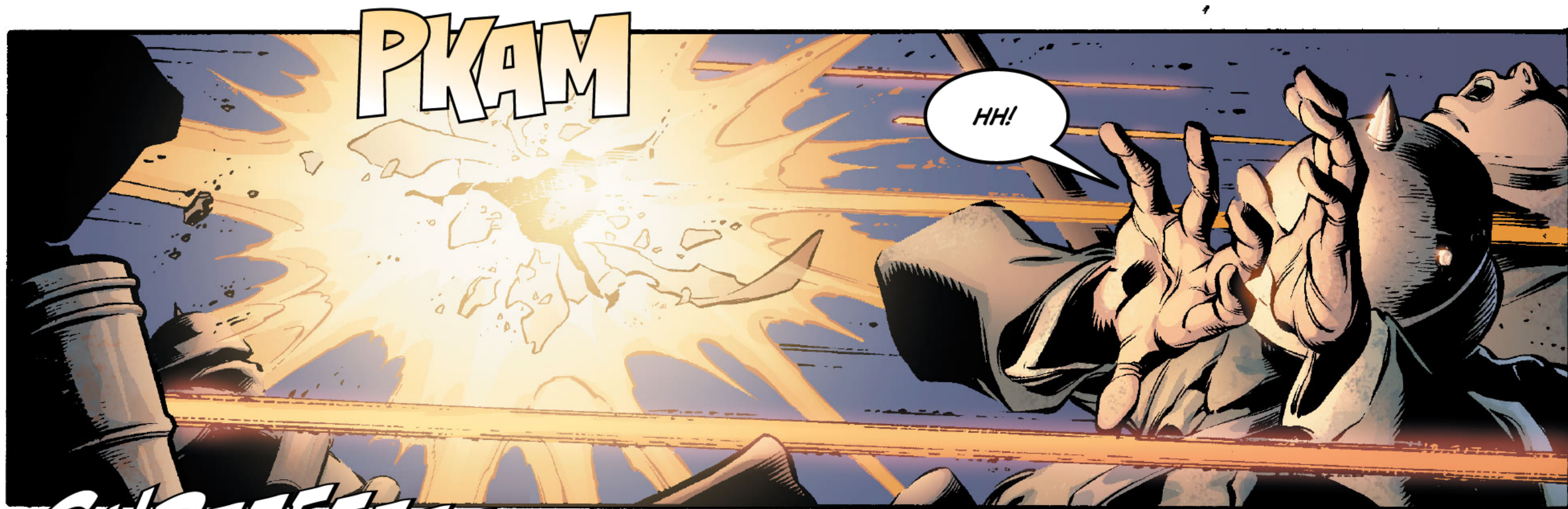


-- JE
CONTACTE
LE POSTE DE
COMMANDEMENT!



BON DIEU --
BON DIEU --





SHREEEEEEEE

DANS
LA BRÈCHE, LES
GARS! REPOUSSEZ-LES --
REPOUSSEZ-LES! VOS
CAMARADES ONT BESOIN
DE VOTRE AIDE! LES
PRUSSIENS DOIVENT
ÊTRE --

-- SEIGNEUR!

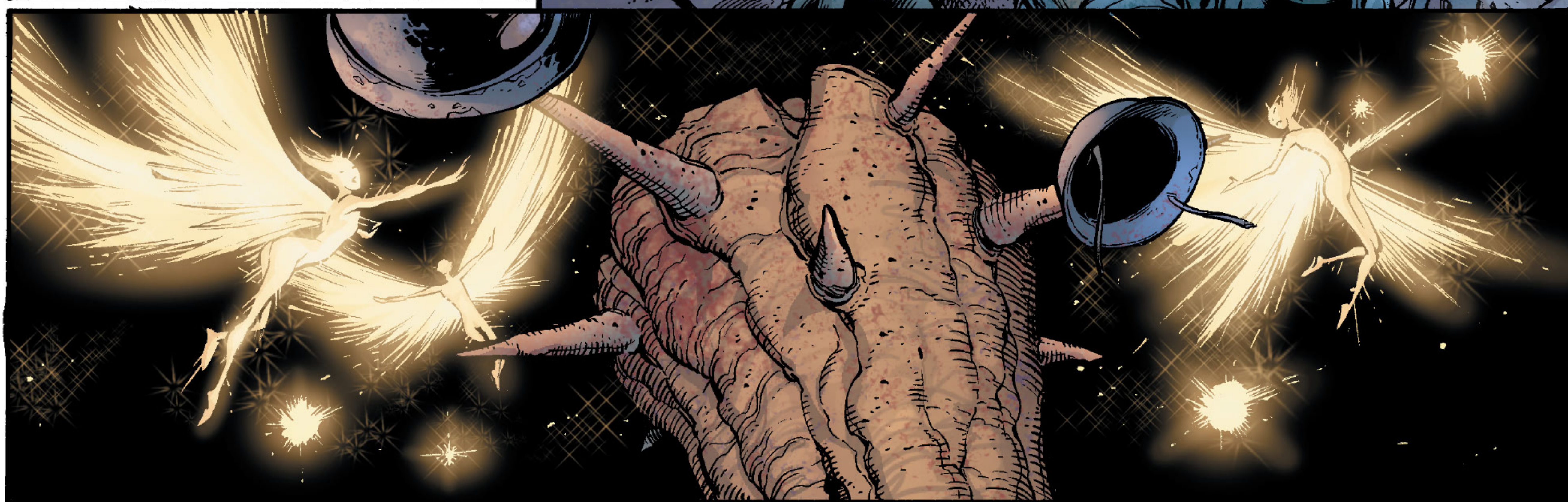
HRUHHH

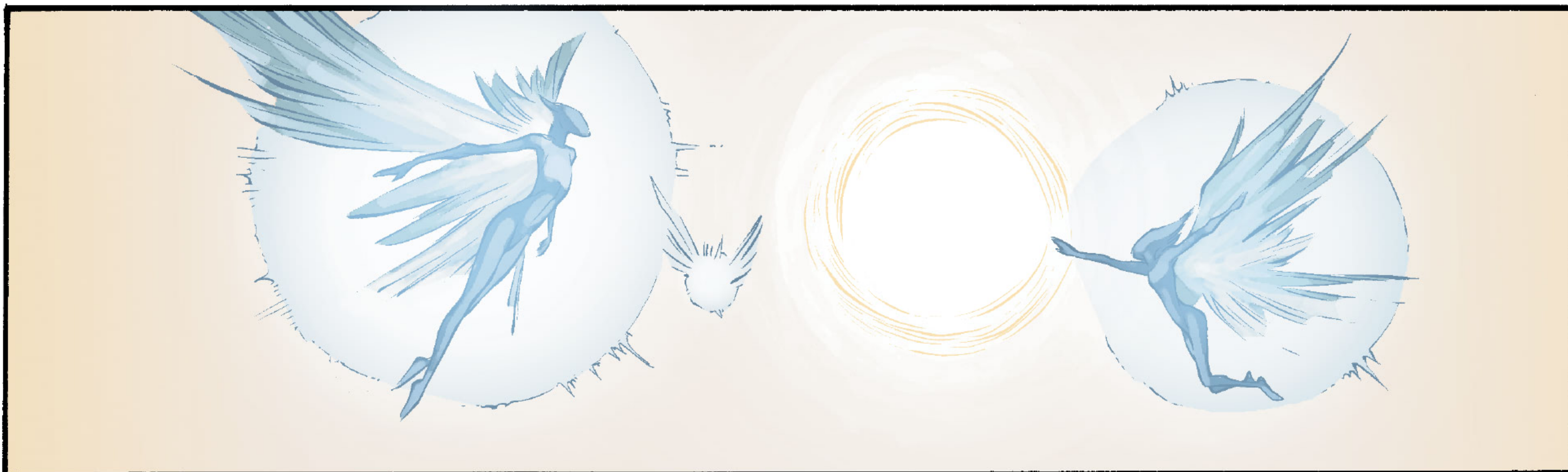
AAAAA!

AAAAA!

AAAAA

AAAAA

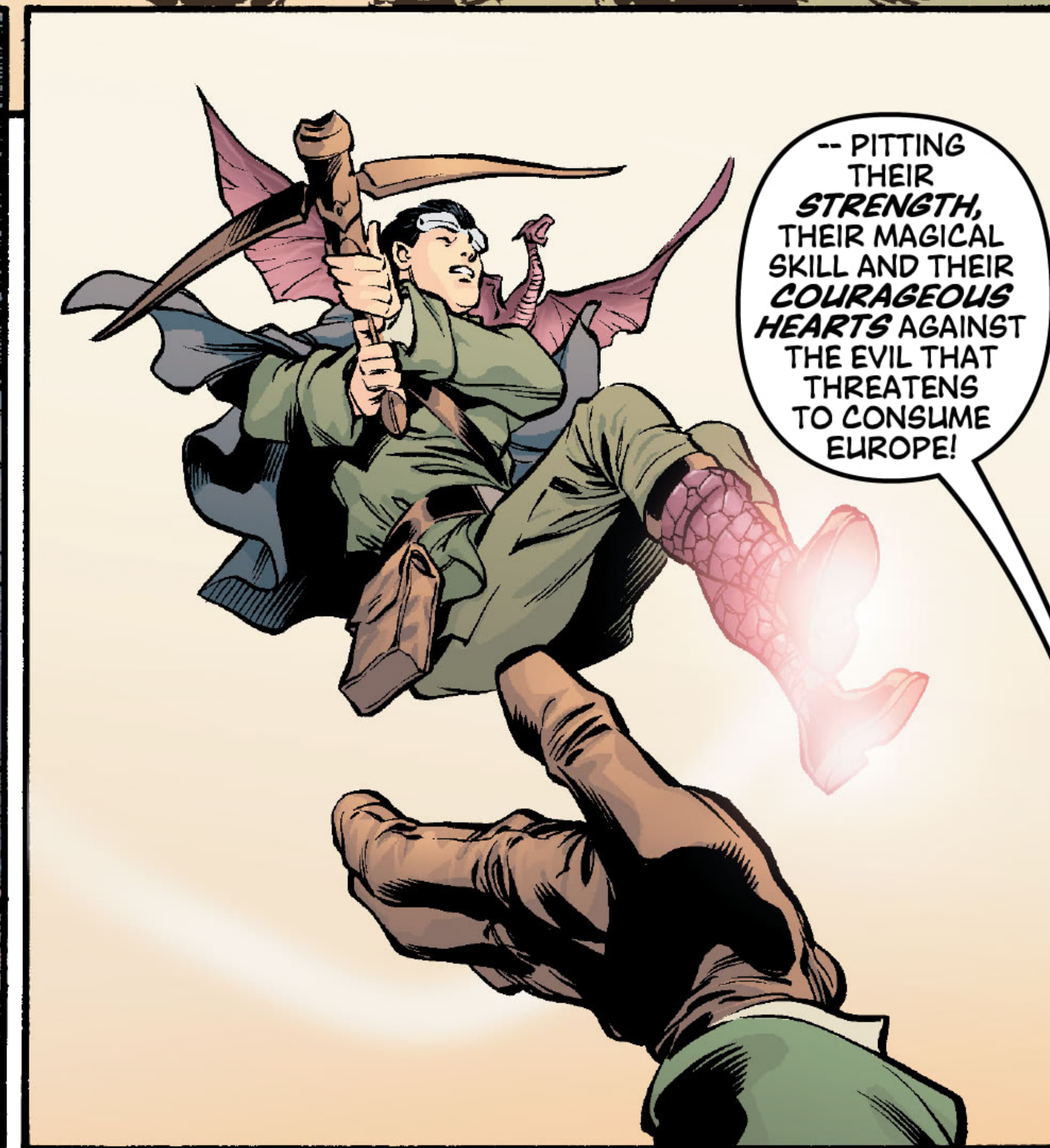


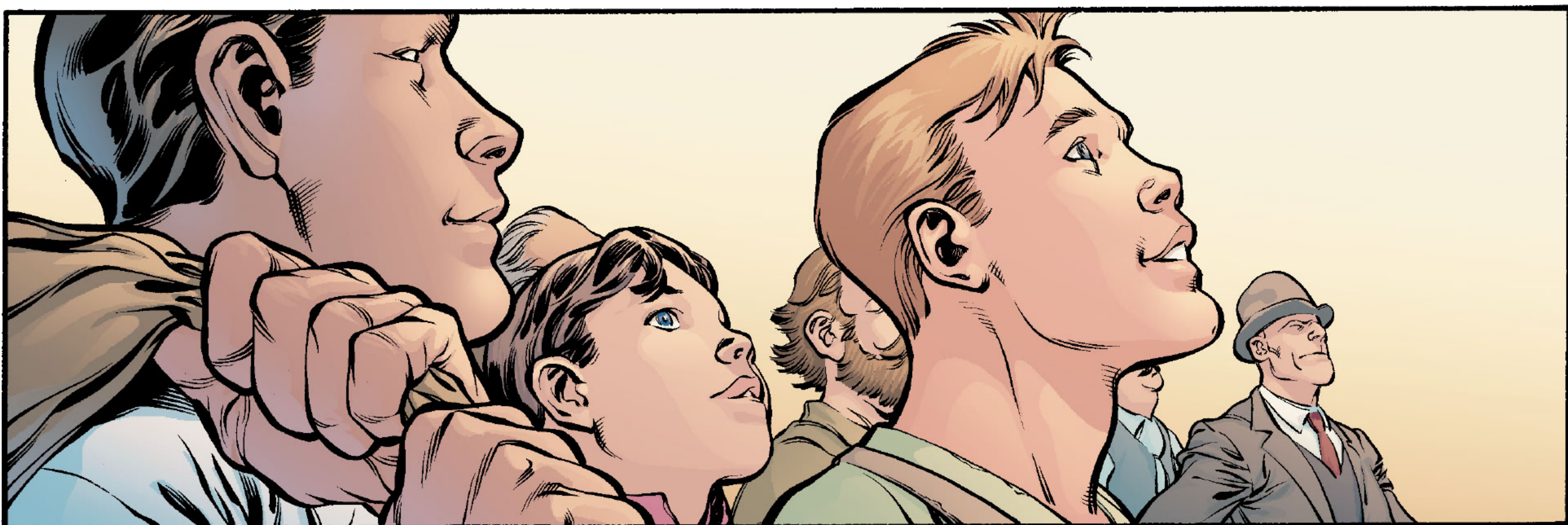
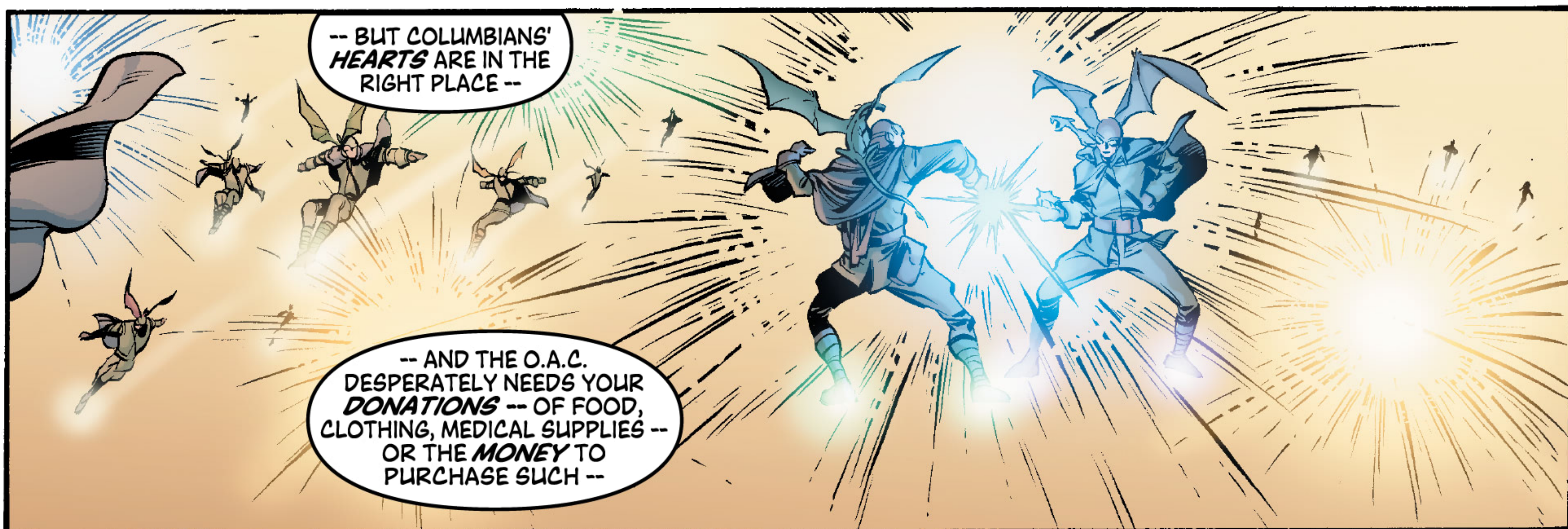
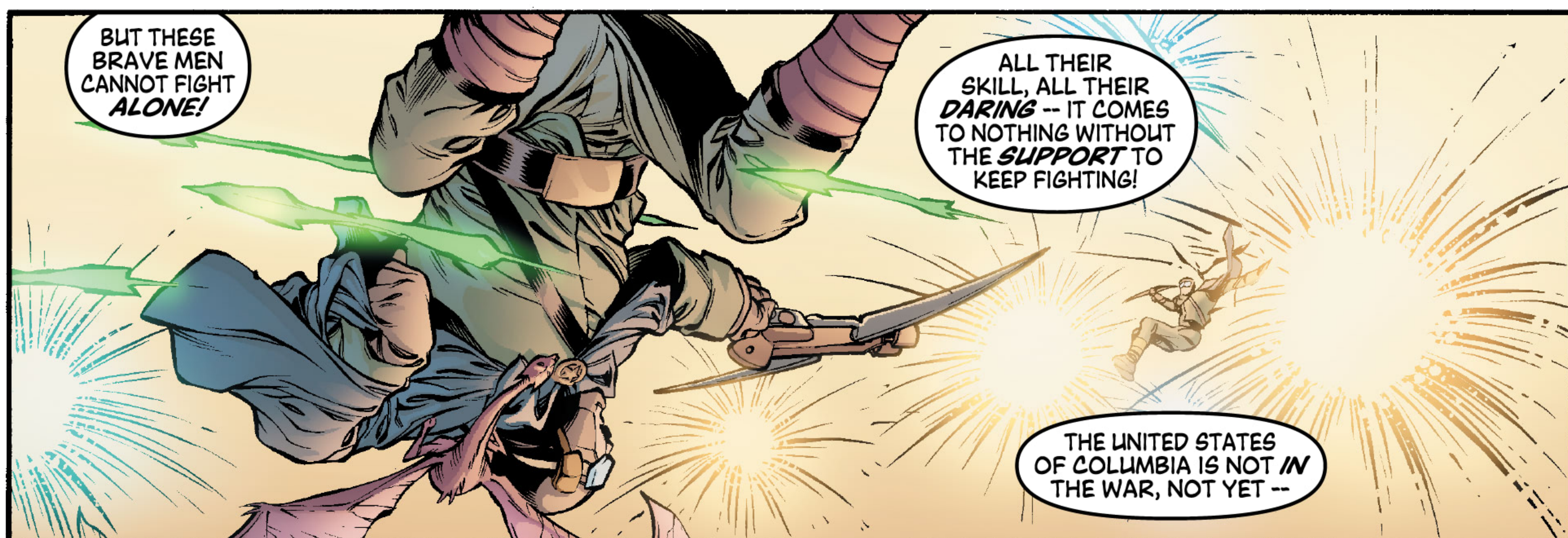


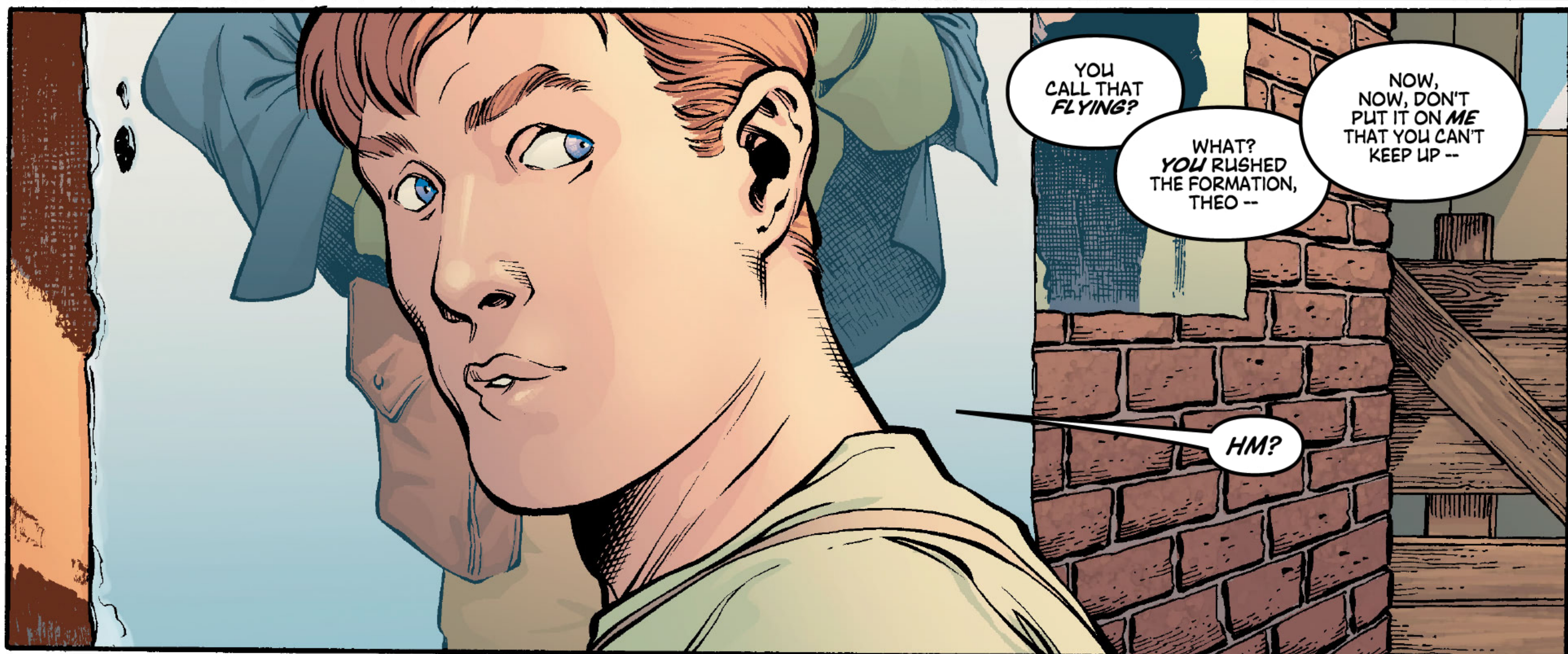
*Herbertsville, Connecticut.
On the shores of Lake Erie.*

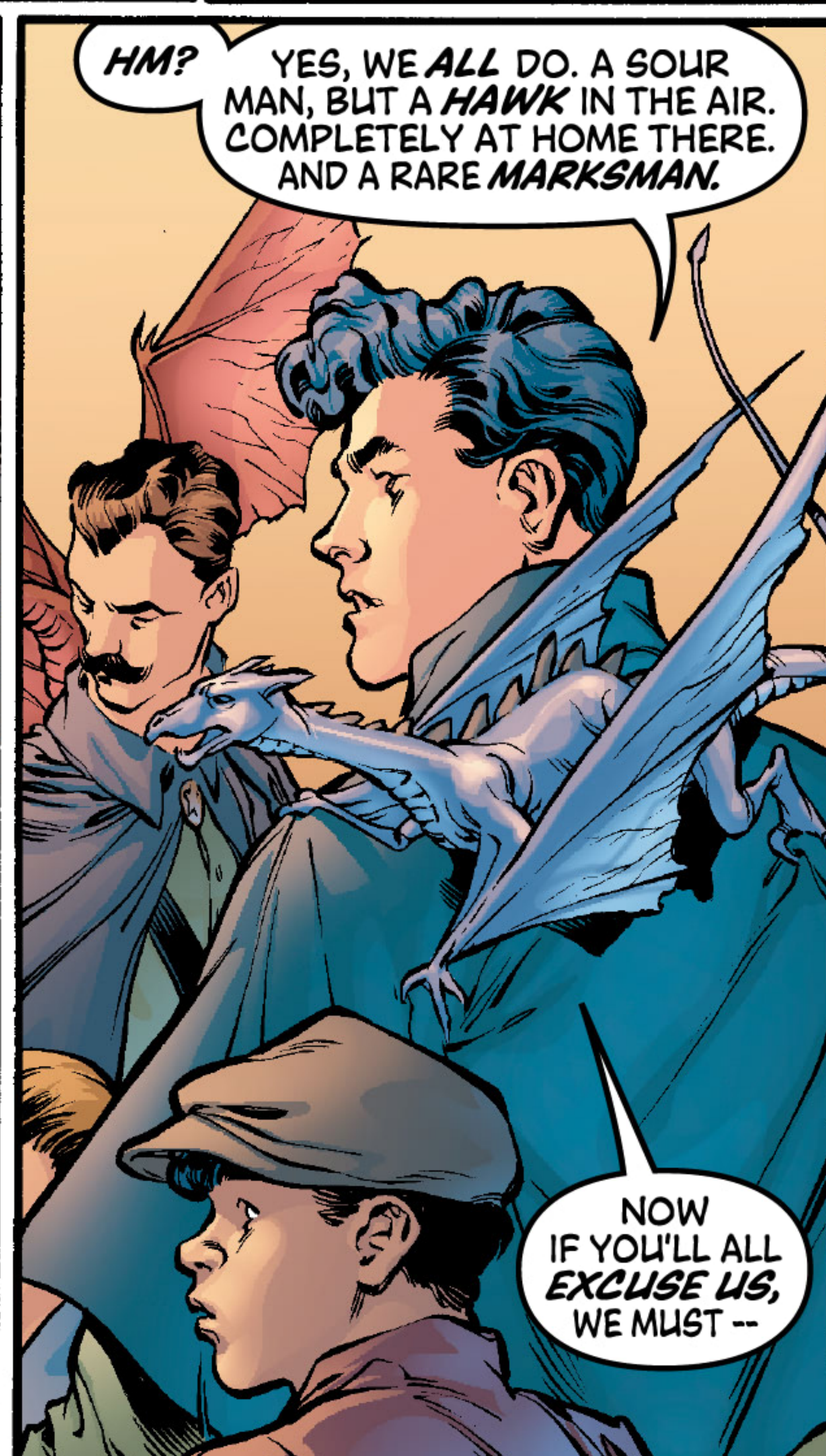
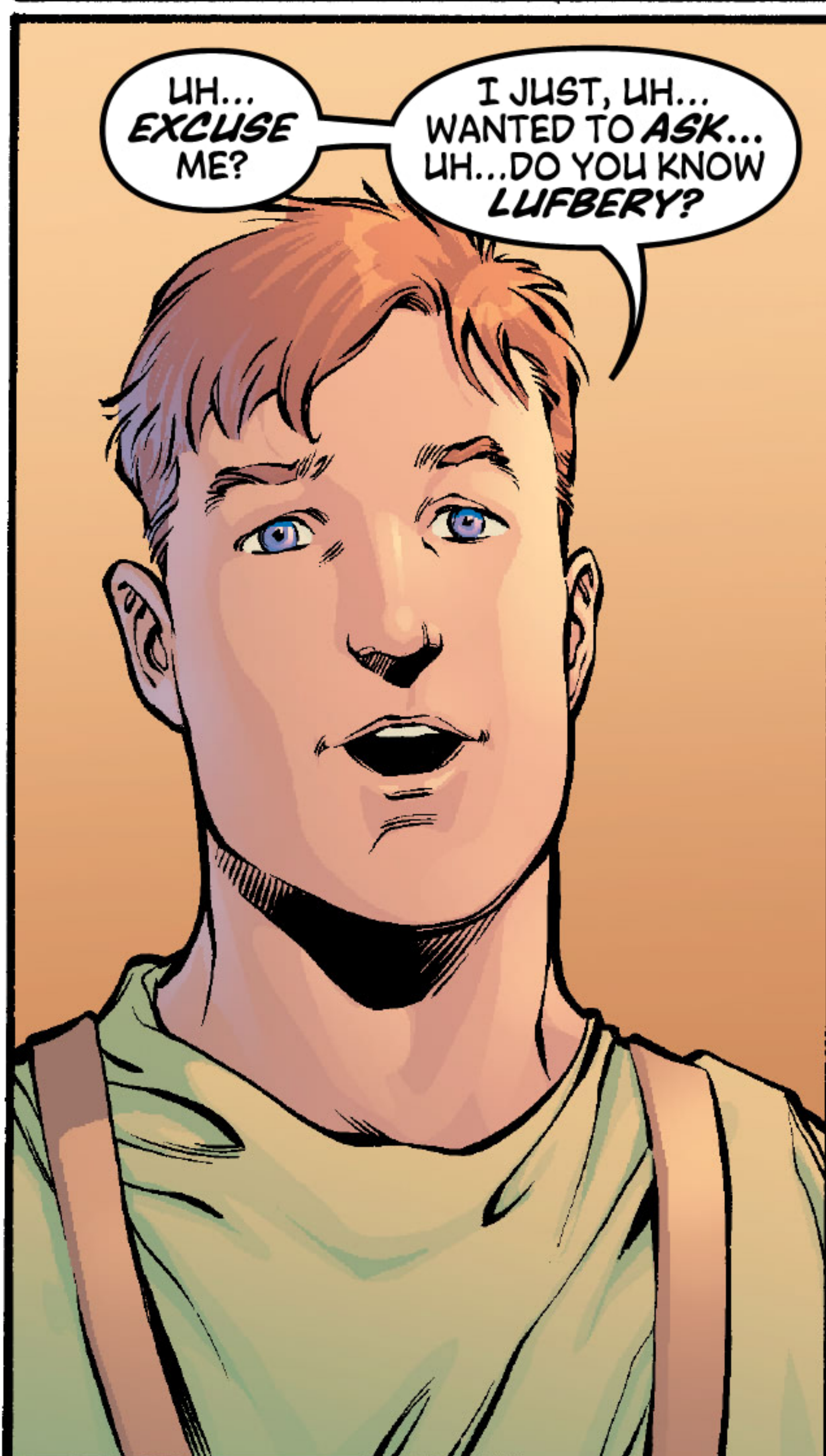
April 1915.













UH, FLETCHER.
FLETCHER
ARROWSMITH,
SIR.

AND YOU'VE HEARD OF
LUFBERY. ARE YOU
QUICK? GOOD EYESIGHT,
GOOD AT **CATCH?**

I...
I **GUESS**
SO. SIR.



WHAT'S **THIS**,
BONNIE?

YOU KNOW HOW
MUCH THE GAULS
NEED **HELP**, SON. THEY
DESPERATELY NEED MEN,
PARTICULARLY **AIRMEN**.
THE PRUSSIANS
DO **HORRIBLE**
THINGS --

-- **RAPE**,
MURDER --

-- THEY
USE THE HEARTS OF
CHILDREN IN THEIR
NECROMANCIES --



BONNIE, CUT IT **OUT**.
HE'S JUST A KID.

HE
DOESN'T **WANT** THIS,
HE'S NOT READY.
RECRUIT SOMEONE
ELSE.

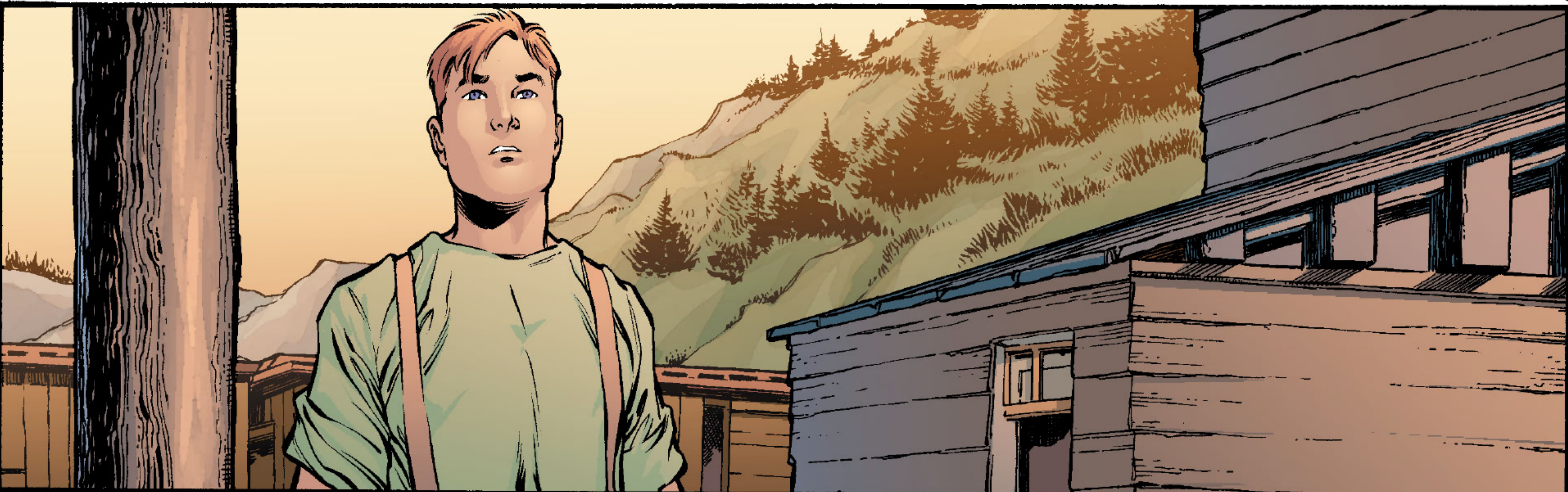
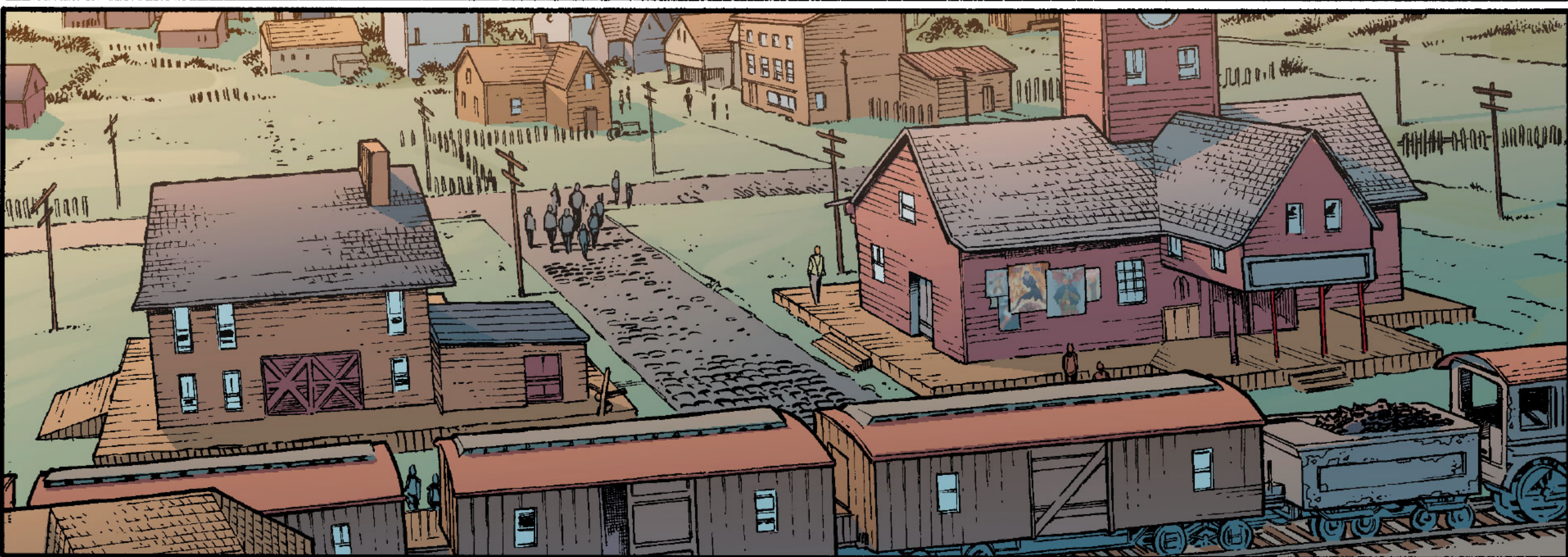
ALL RIGHT,
ALL RIGHT.

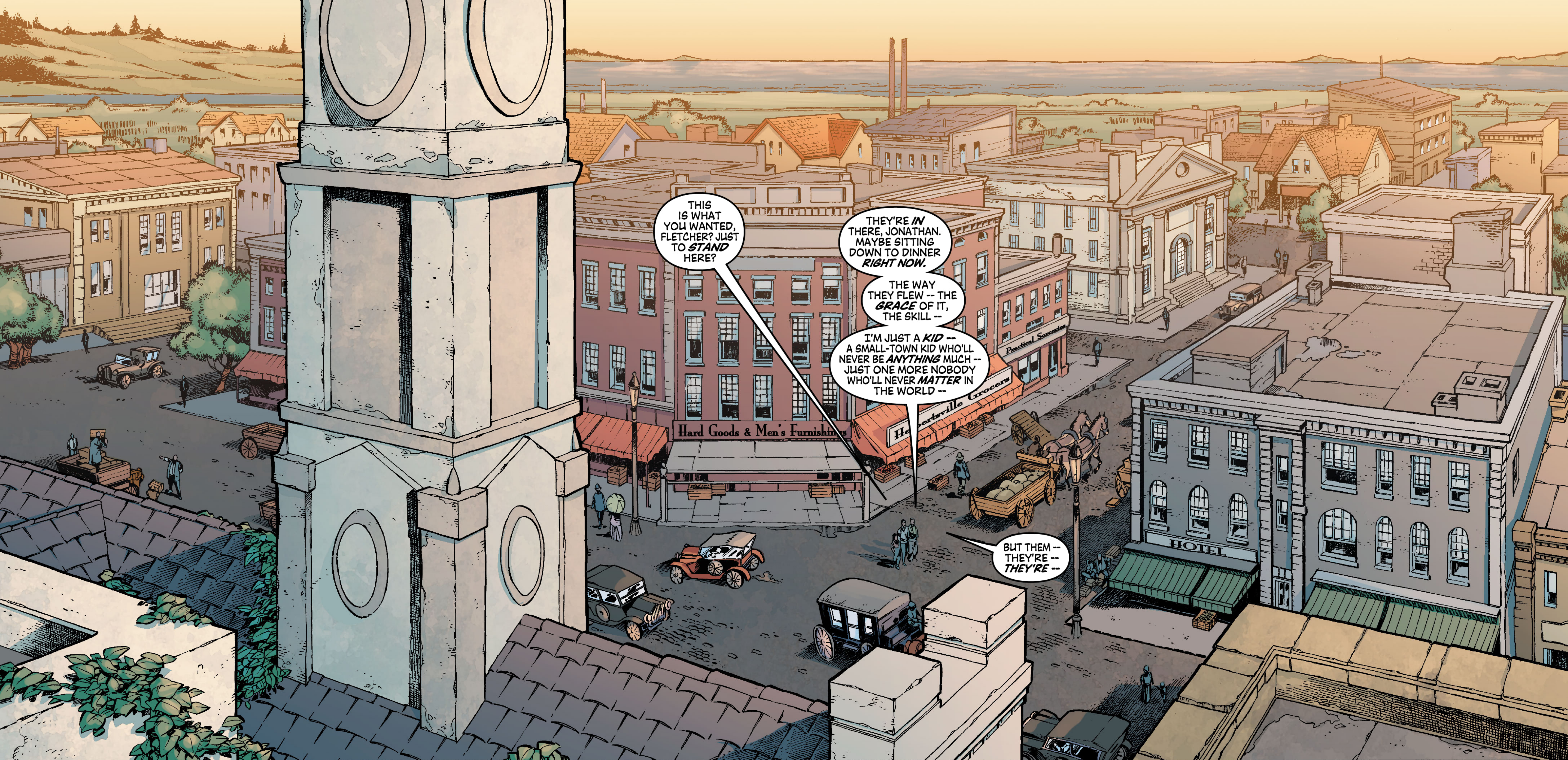


WE **TRAIN** QUALIFIED CANDIDATES,
FLETCHER ARROWSMITH --
TEACH THEM THE MAGIC SPELLS
THAT LET THEM **FLY**.

THINK ABOUT IT.
MAYBE LOOK US
UP IN A COUPLE
OF **YEARS**.

AND TELL YOUR **PARENTS** --
WE'D APPRECIATE THEIR
DONATIONS!





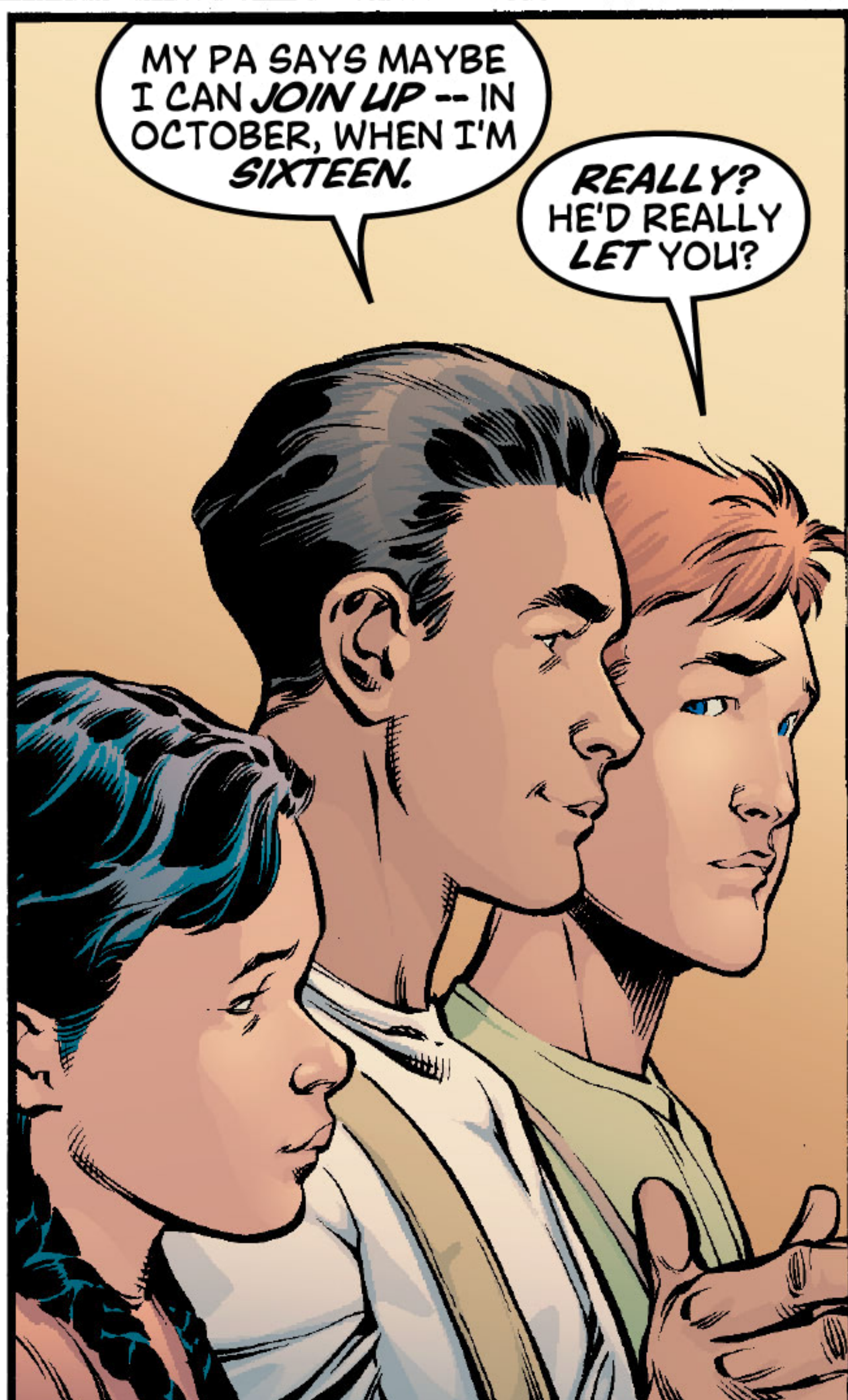
THIS IS WHAT YOU WANTED, FLETCHER? JUST TO **STAND** HERE?

THEY'RE **IN** THERE, JONATHAN. MAYBE SITTING DOWN TO DINNER **RIGHT NOW**.

THE WAY THEY FLEW -- THE **GRACE** OF IT, THE **SKILL** --

I'M JUST A **KID** -- A SMALL-TOWN KID WHO'LL NEVER BE **ANYTHING** MUCH -- JUST ONE MORE NOBODY WHO'LL NEVER **MATTER** IN THE WORLD --

BUT THEM -- THEY'RE -- **THEY'RE** --



MY PA SAYS MAYBE I CAN **JOIN UP** -- IN OCTOBER, WHEN I'M **SIXTEEN**.

REALLY? HE'D REALLY LET YOU?



OH, IT'D BE **WONDERFUL** -- TO LEARN TO **FLY** LIKE THAT --

HA! DON'T EVEN **BOTHER**, FLETCH -- YOUR DAD WOULD **NEVER** ALLOW IT. HE'LL KEEP YOUR FEET ON THE **GROUND**, YOU'LL SEE.

WHY, IF HE KNEW YOU'D EVEN **SPOKEN** TO WINIFRED HERE...

ENOUGH, JONATHAN. DON'T RUB IT IN.



COME ON, WINNIE. I'LL WALK YOU **HOME**.

MAYBE YOUR FATHER COULD **TEACH** FLETCHER. I CAN SEE HIM NOW, LUMBERING OVER THE TREES LIKE A **DRAFT HORSE**...

HA!



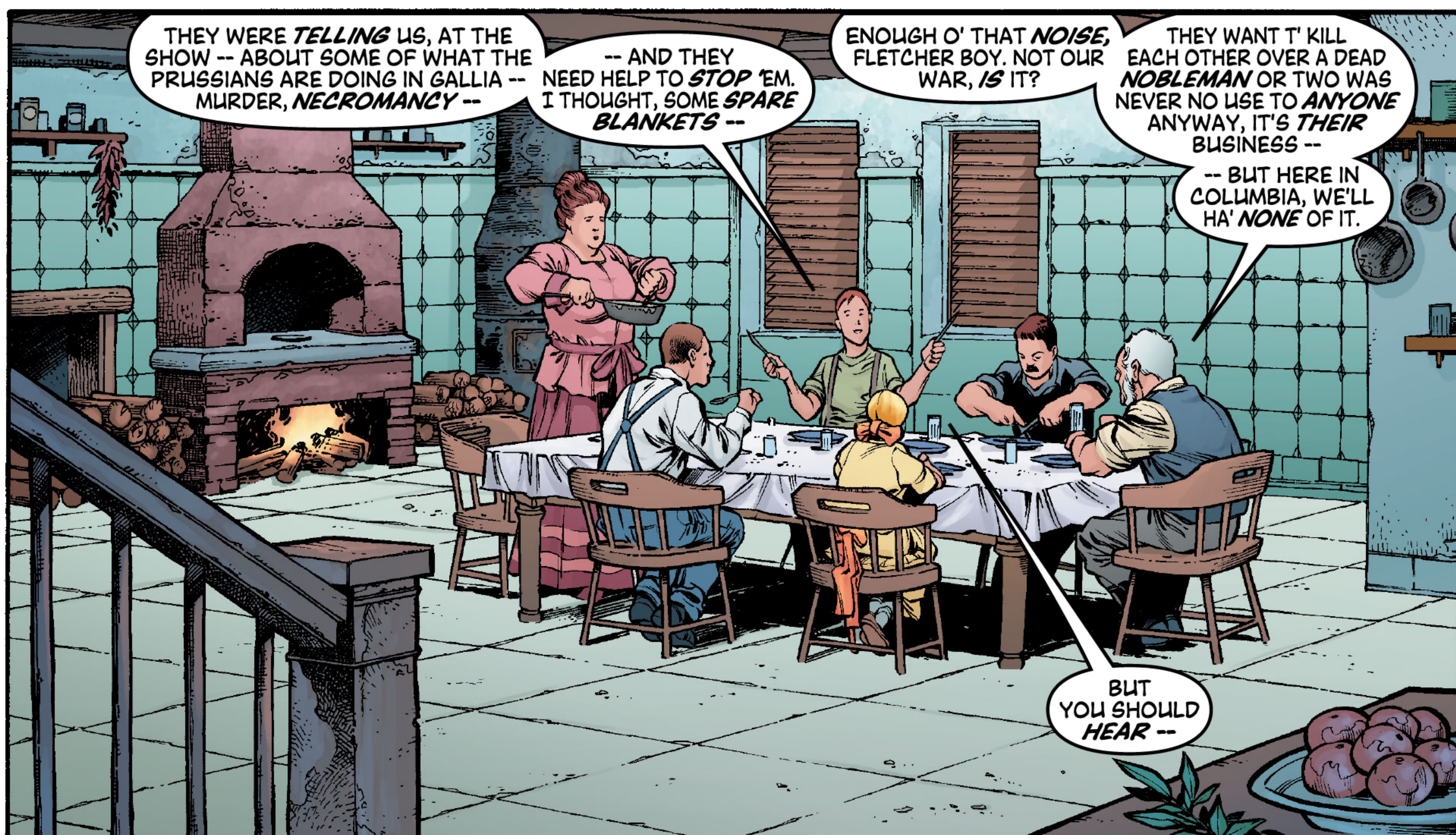
WHERE'VE Y'BEEN ALL THIS TIME, BOY? YOU WERE SENT T' GET MORE **LEAD SOLDER**!

I HAVE IT **WITH** ME, DAD. I JUST STOPPED TO WATCH THE AIR SHOW...

VLEETCH-BOY!



HMPH. IDIOT **FOOLISHNESS**. SHOULDN'T HAVE WASTED Y'R **TIME**...



THEY WERE *TELLING* US, AT THE SHOW -- ABOUT SOME OF WHAT THE PRUSSIANS ARE DOING IN GALLIA -- MURDER, *NECROMANCY* --

-- AND THEY NEED HELP TO *STOP* 'EM. I THOUGHT, SOME *SPARE BLANKETS* --

ENOUGH O' THAT *NOISE*, FLETCHER BOY. NOT OUR WAR, *IS* IT?

THEY WANT T' KILL EACH OTHER OVER A DEAD *NOBLEMAN* OR TWO WAS NEVER NO USE TO *ANYONE* ANYWAY, IT'S *THEIR* BUSINESS --

-- BUT HERE IN COLUMBIA, WE'LL HA' *NONE* OF IT.

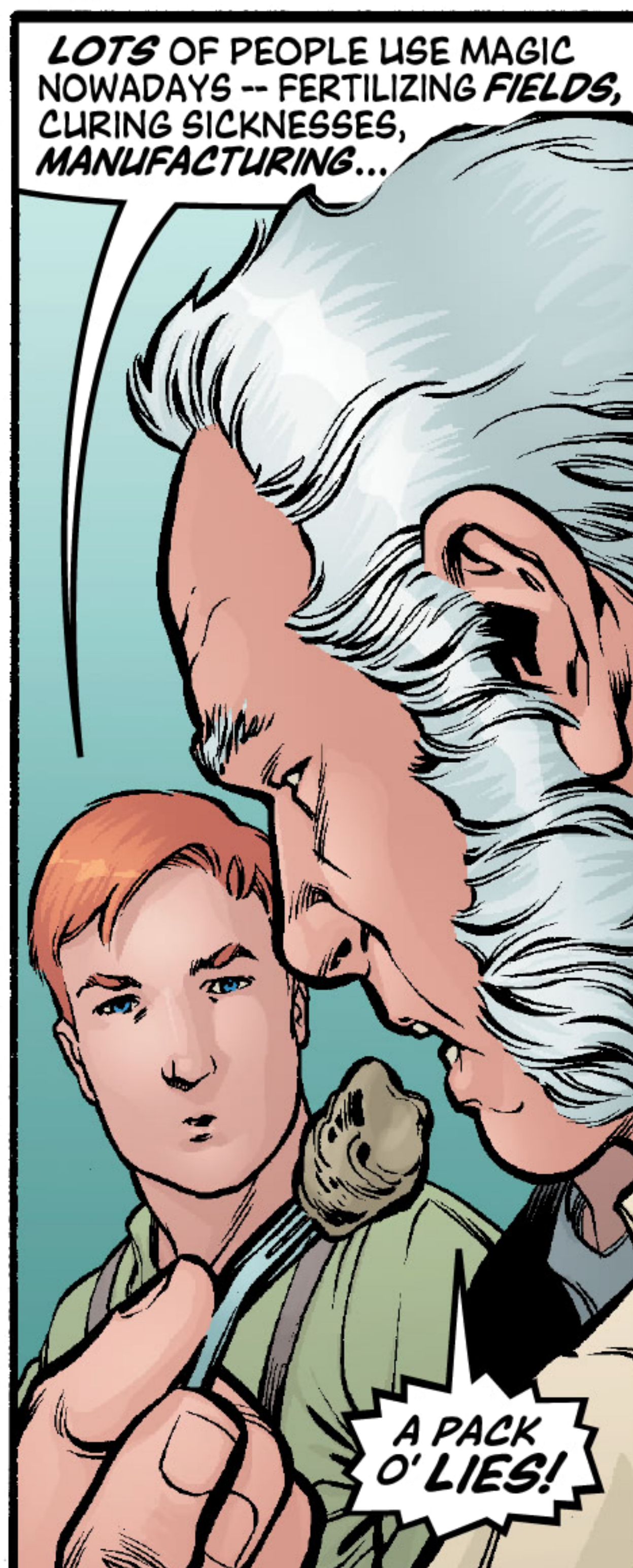
BUT YOU SHOULD *HEAR* --



AND THIS *FLYIN'* NONSENSE -- EVEN *MORE* FOOLISHNESS. WHAT'S IT MAKE THAT A MAN COULD *EAT*, OR *USE*, OR *SELL*?

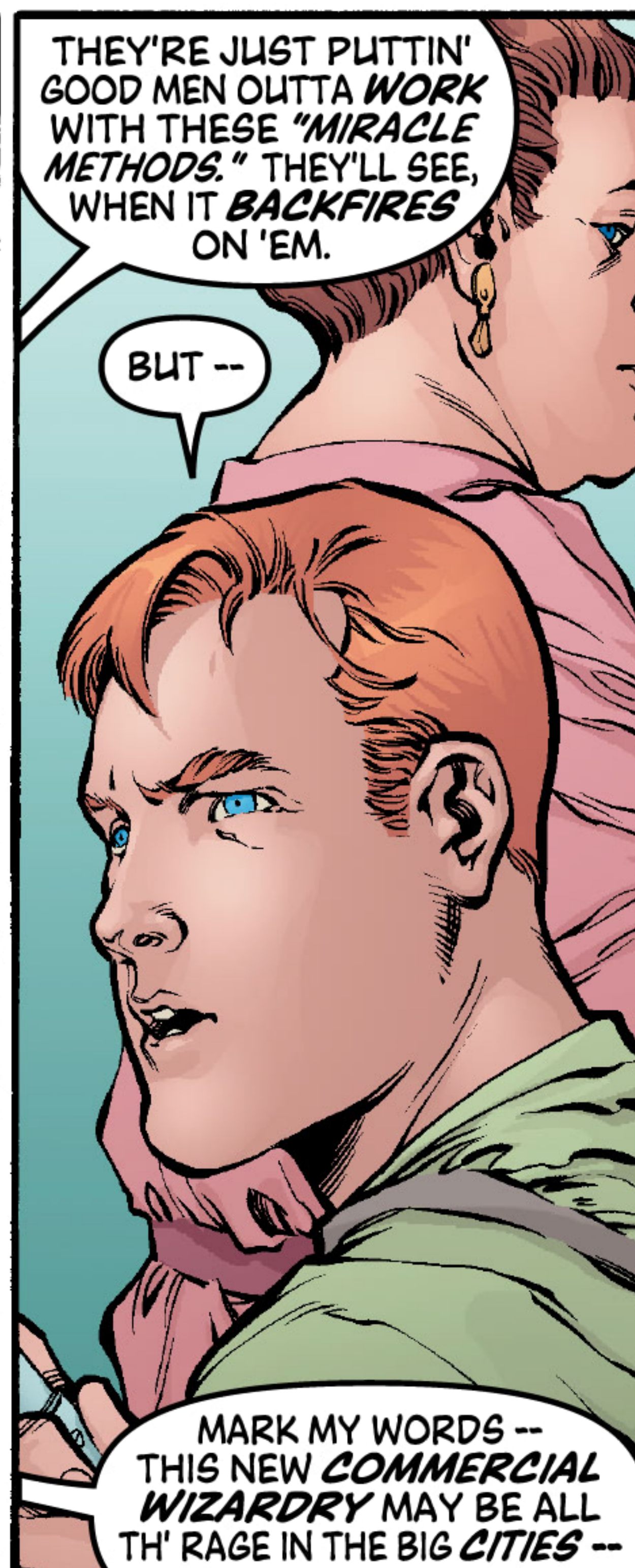
NOTHIN', THAT'S WHAT!

'S A REASON MAGIC DON'T WORK AROUND COLD *IRON* -- IT'S *UNNATURAL*. *NOTHIN'* SENSIBLE MEN SHOULD PUT THEIR *TRUST* IN.



LOTS OF PEOPLE USE MAGIC NOWADAYS -- FERTILIZING *FIELDS*, CURING SICKNESSES, *MANUFACTURING*...

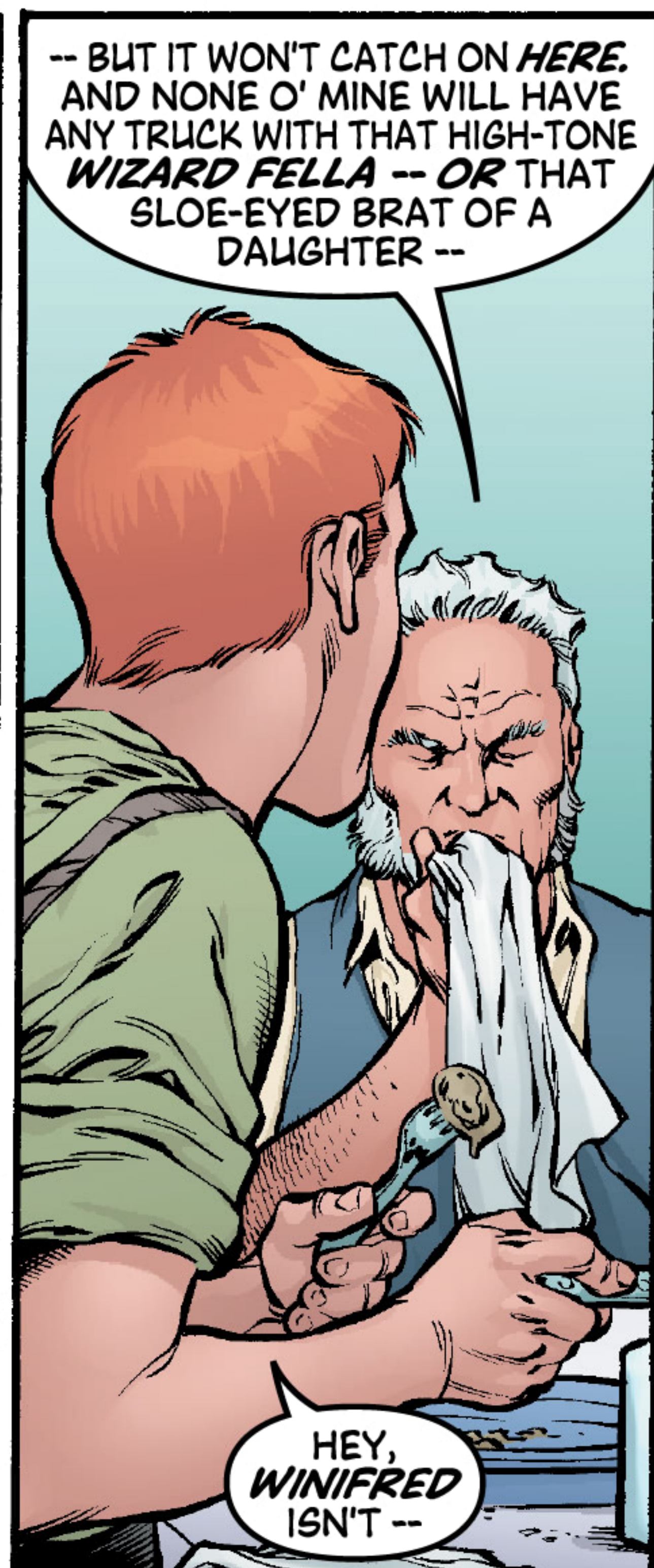
A *PACK O' LIES!*



THEY'RE JUST PUTTIN' GOOD MEN OUTTA *WORK* WITH THESE "*MIRACLE METHODS*." THEY'LL SEE, WHEN IT *BACKFIRES* ON 'EM.

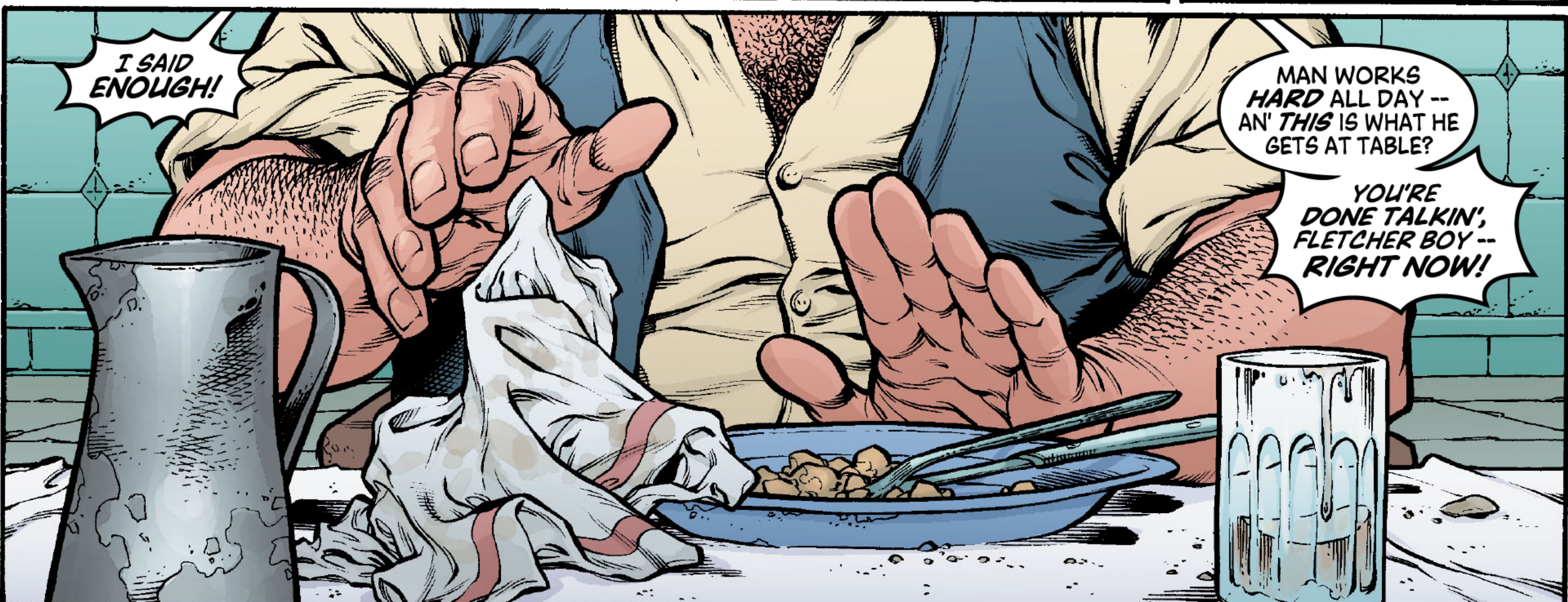
BUT --

MARK MY WORDS -- THIS NEW *COMMERCIAL WIZARDRY* MAY BE ALL TH' RAGE IN THE BIG *CITIES* --



-- BUT IT WON'T CATCH ON *HERE*. AND NONE O' MINE WILL HAVE ANY TRUCK WITH THAT HIGH-TONE *WIZARD FELLA* -- OR THAT SLOE-EYED BRAT OF A DAUGHTER --

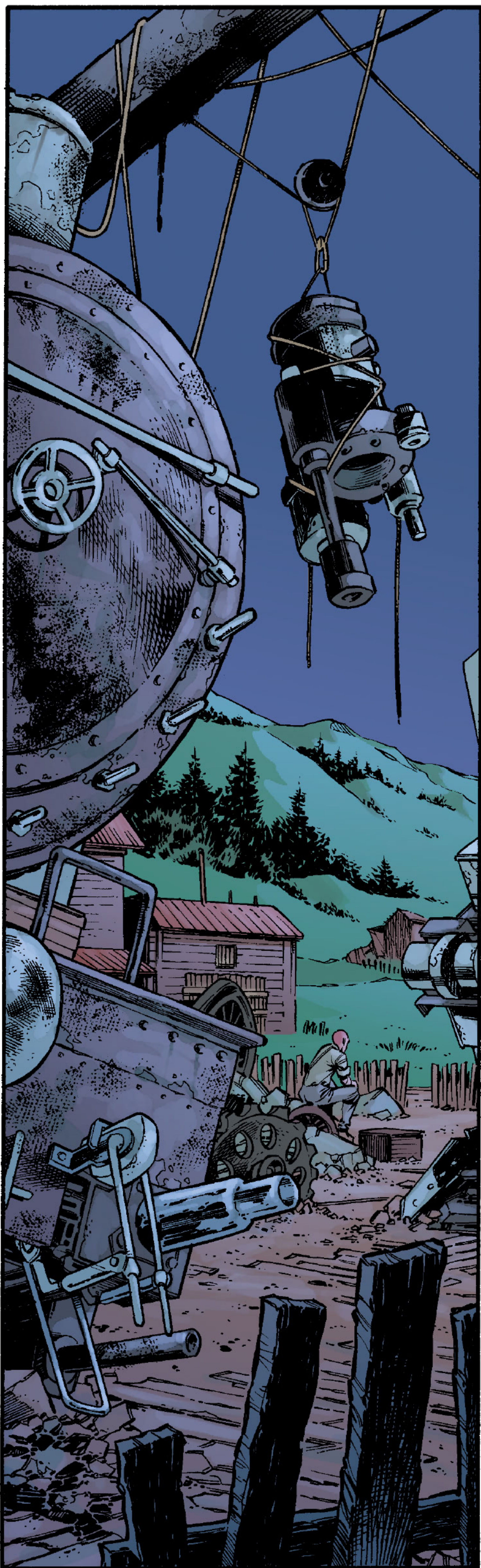
HEY, *WINIFRED* ISN'T --



I SAID *ENOUGH!*

MAN WORKS *HARD* ALL DAY -- AN' *THIS* IS WHAT HE GETS AT TABLE?

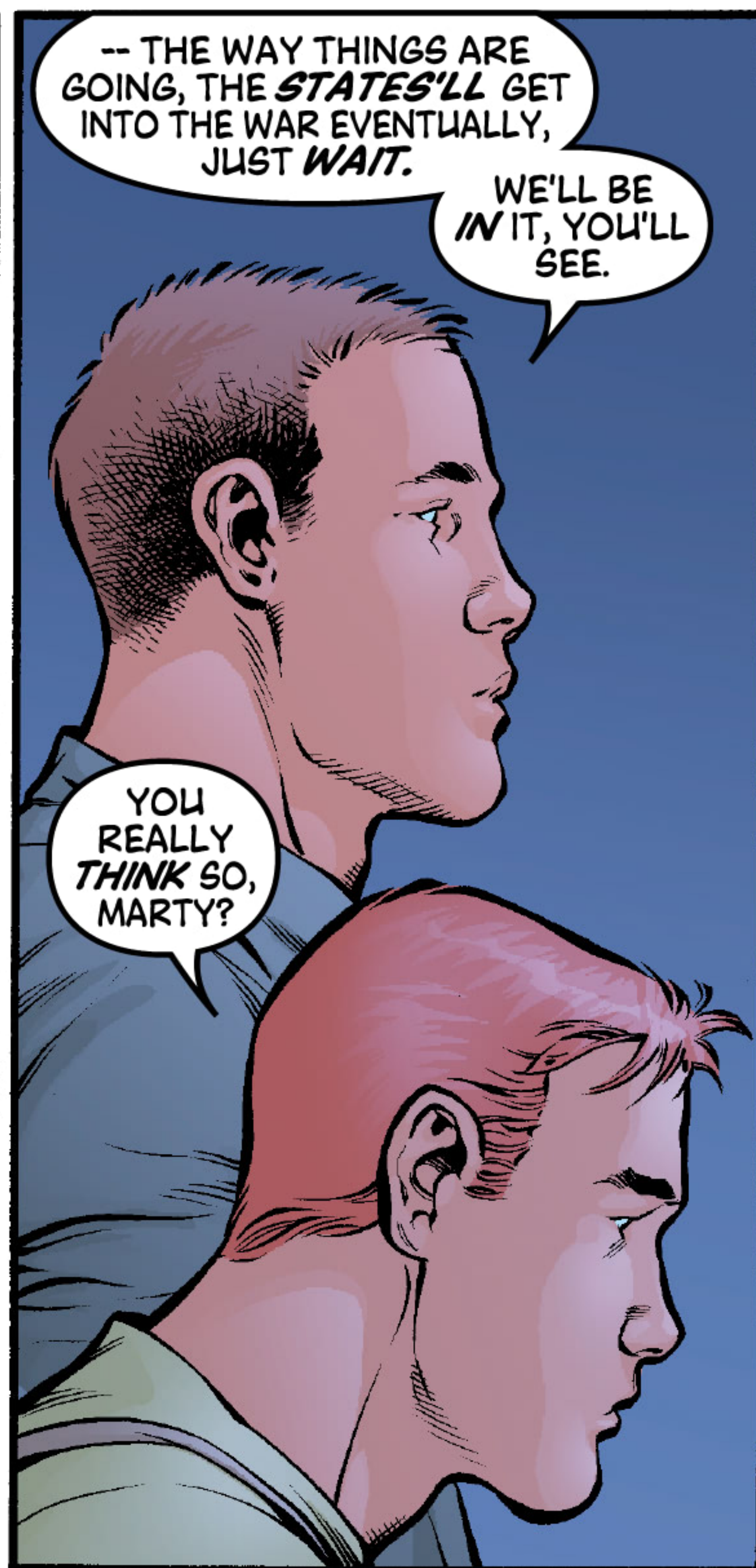
YOU'RE DONE TALKIN', FLETCHER BOY -- *RIGHT NOW!*



SULKING,
FLETCH?

Y'KNOW, I SAW A *PART*
OF THE SHOW, UP WHEN
THEY CRESTED THE HILL.
IT WAS *SOMETHING*,
ALL RIGHT.

AND
DON'T PAY TOO
MUCH MIND TO
DAD --



-- THE WAY THINGS ARE
GOING, THE *STATES*'LL GET
INTO THE WAR EVENTUALLY,
JUST *WAIT*.

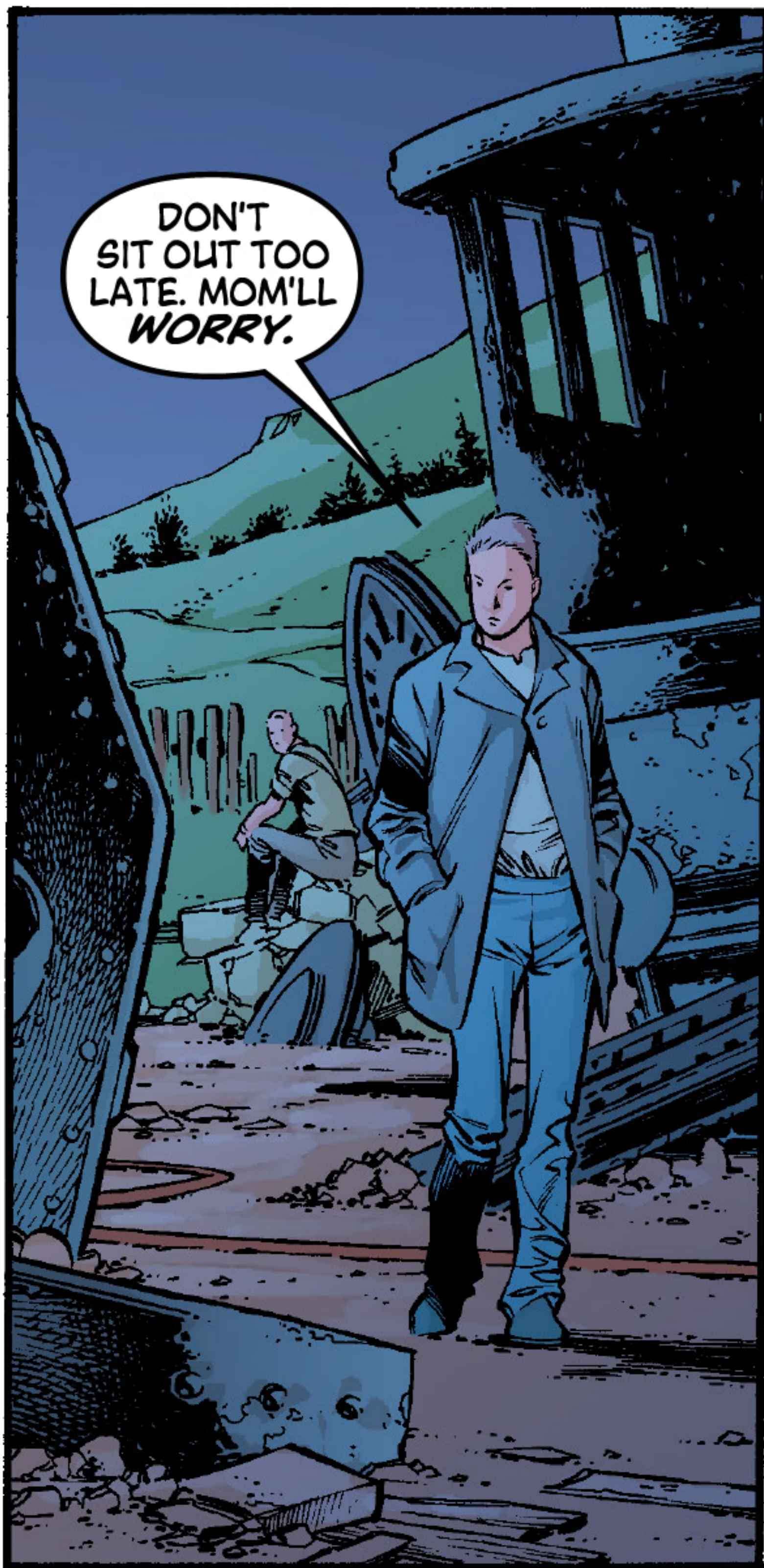
WE'LL BE
IN IT, YOU'LL
SEE.

YOU
REALLY
THINK SO,
MARTY?



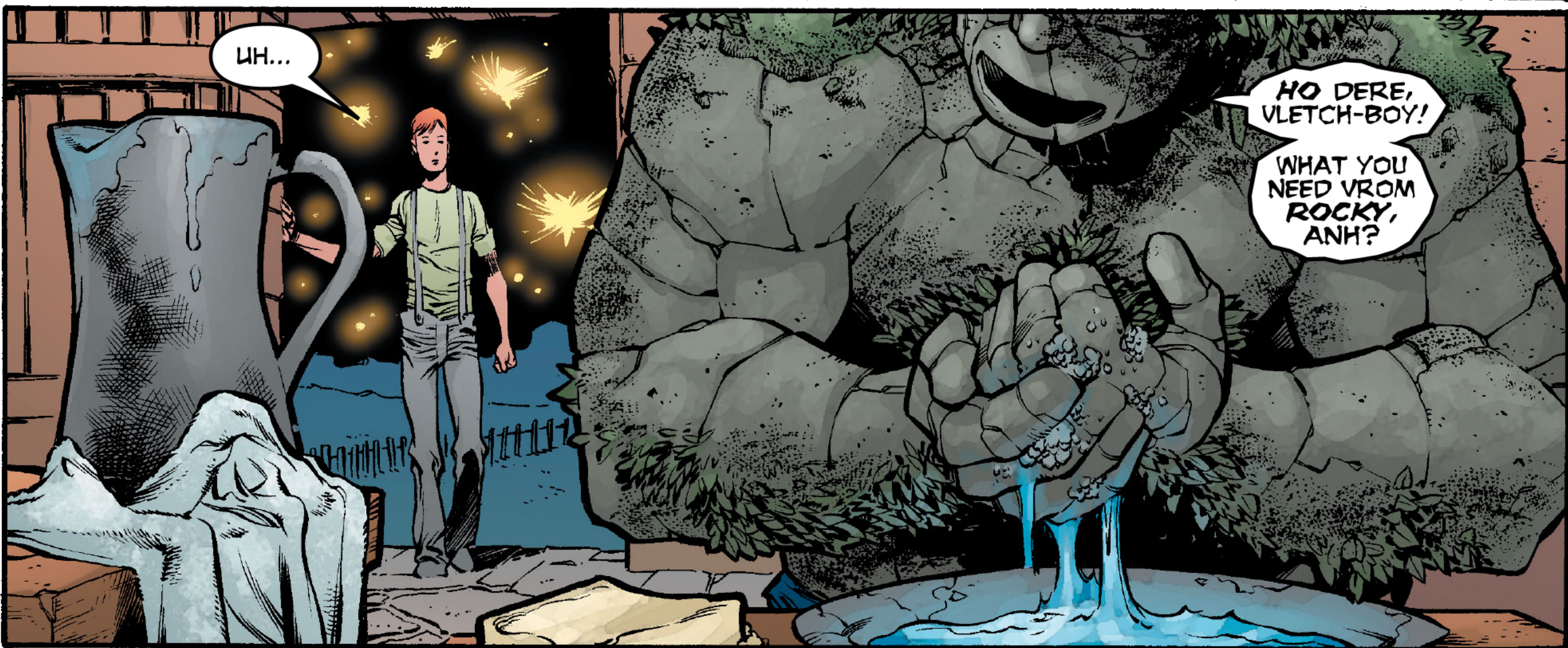
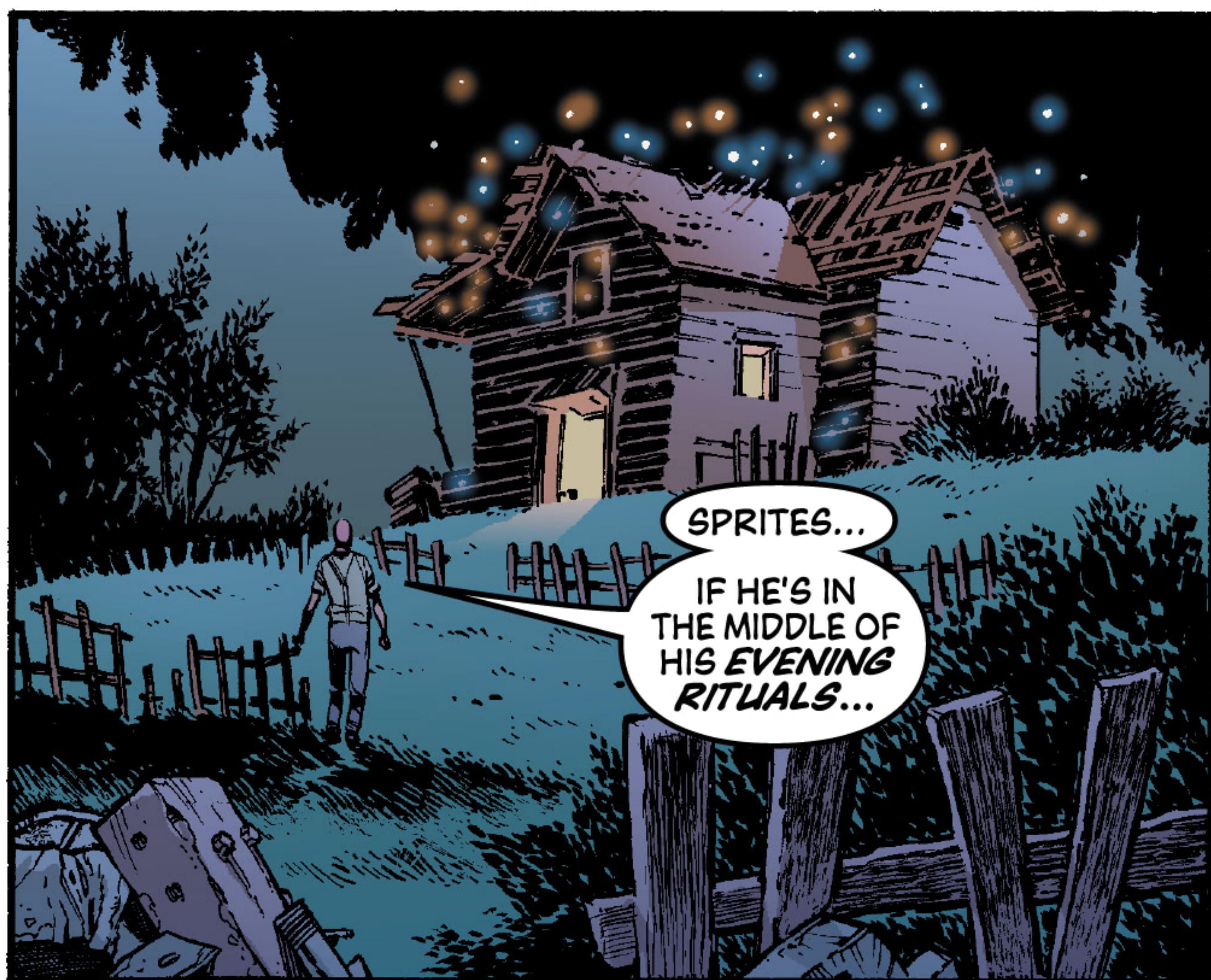
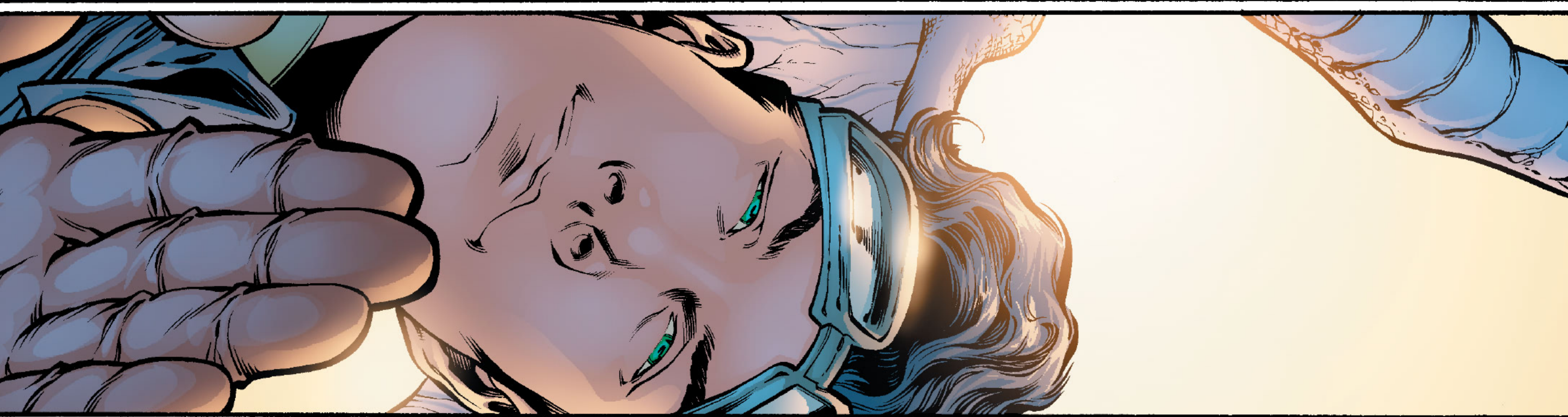
WELL, MAYBE
NOT *YOU*.

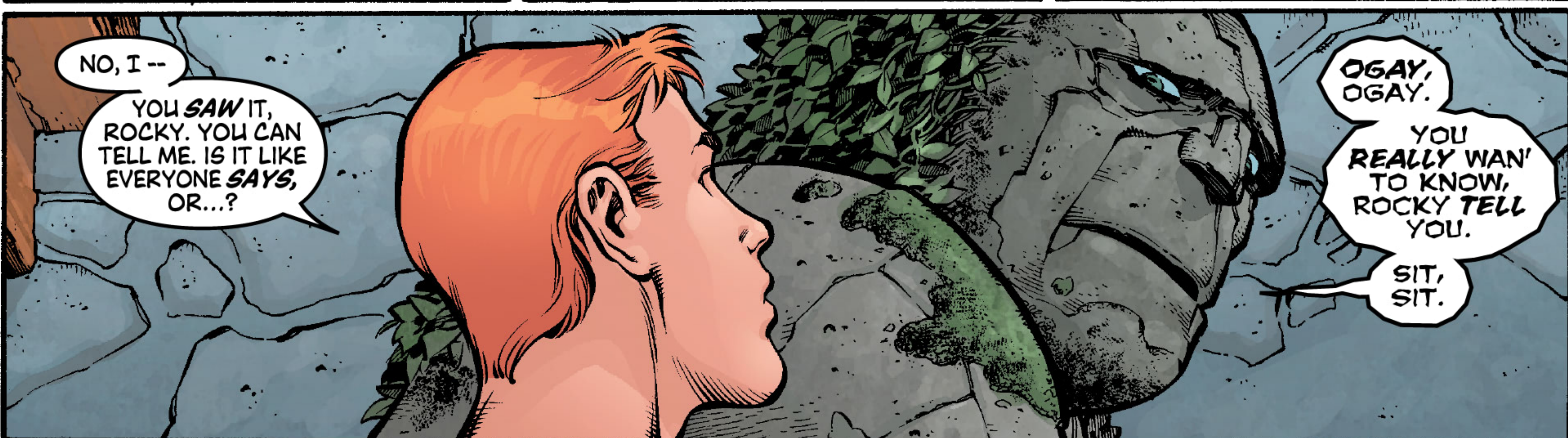
I'LL BE IN IT,
THERE'LL BE TIME FOR
THAT. BUT THERE'S NO
WAY IT'LL LAST LONG
ENOUGH FOR A KID
YOUR AGE...



DON'T
SIT OUT TOO
LATE. MOM'LL
WORRY.









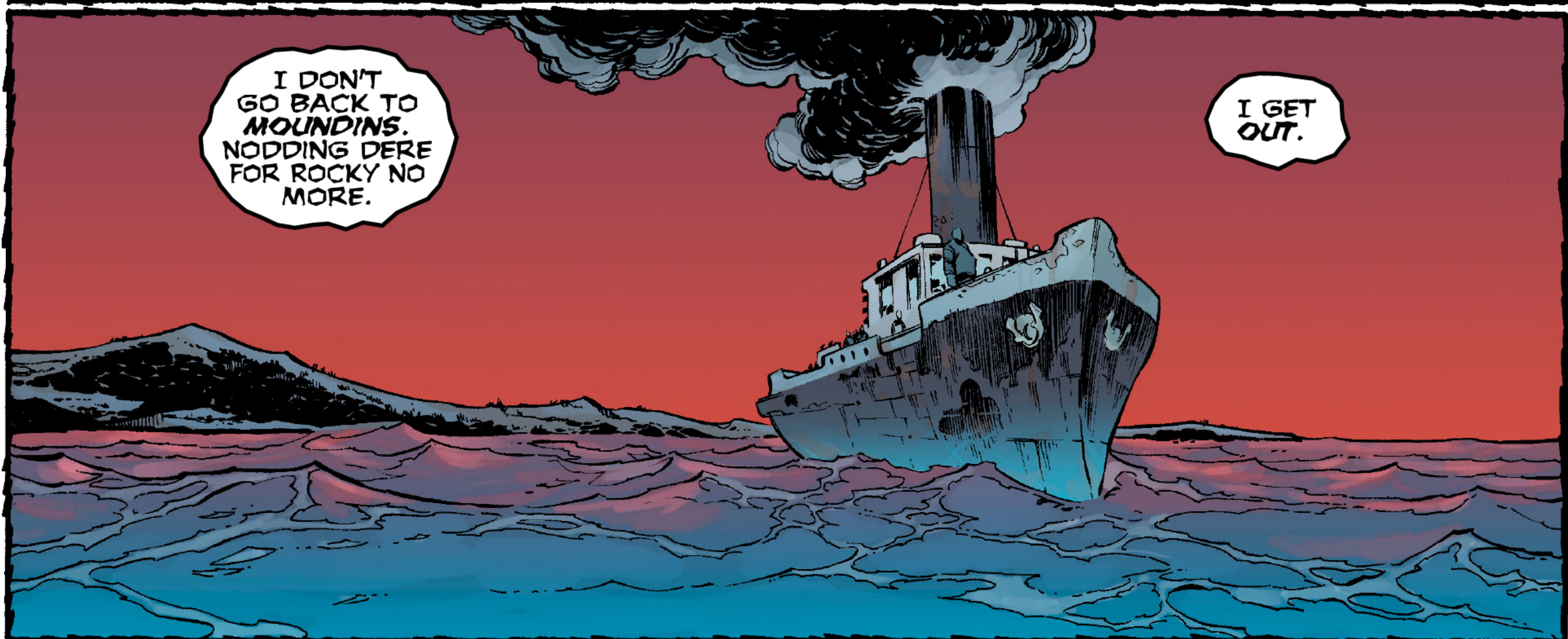


IT
HAPPEN.

I AM IN
VILLAGE, SELLING
CRYSTALS TO WIZARD
LEAVING FOR ARMY.
PRUSSIA ATTACK
LOT'ARINGIA. DEY SAY
IN CASE LOT'ARINGIA
ATTACK DEM
FIRST.

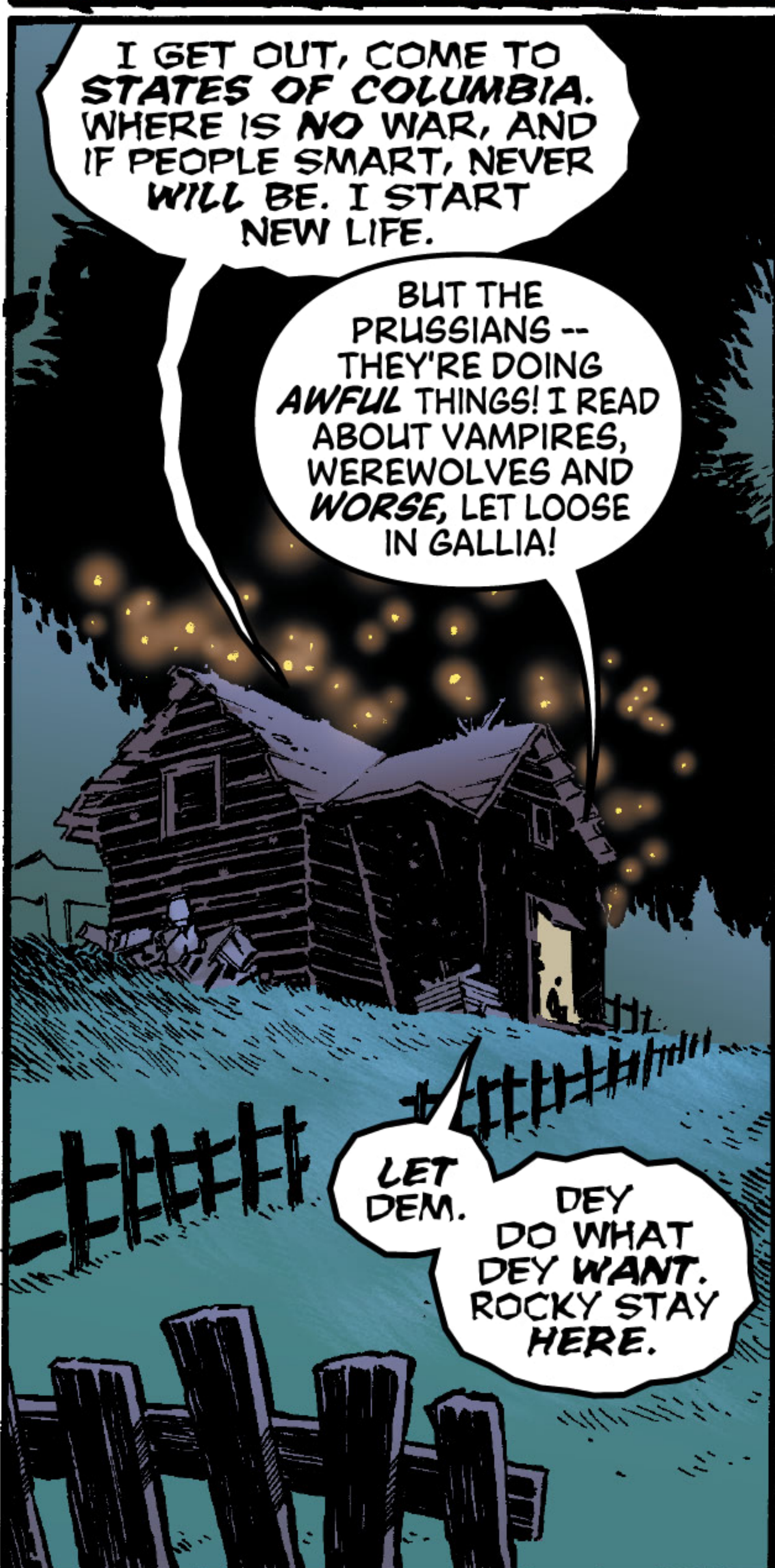
DEY GOING
T'ROUGH, ON
WAY TO ATTACK
GALLIA.

DRAGONVLAME,
CANNONS -- DEY ATTACK
WIT' ENOUGH TO BREAK
STONE WALLS. ENOUGH
TO BREAK STONE WALLS
BREAKS MY FAMILY, TOO.
BREAK DEM DEAD.



I DON'T
GO BACK TO
MOUNDINS.
NODDING DERE
FOR ROCKY NO
MORE.

I GET
OUT.

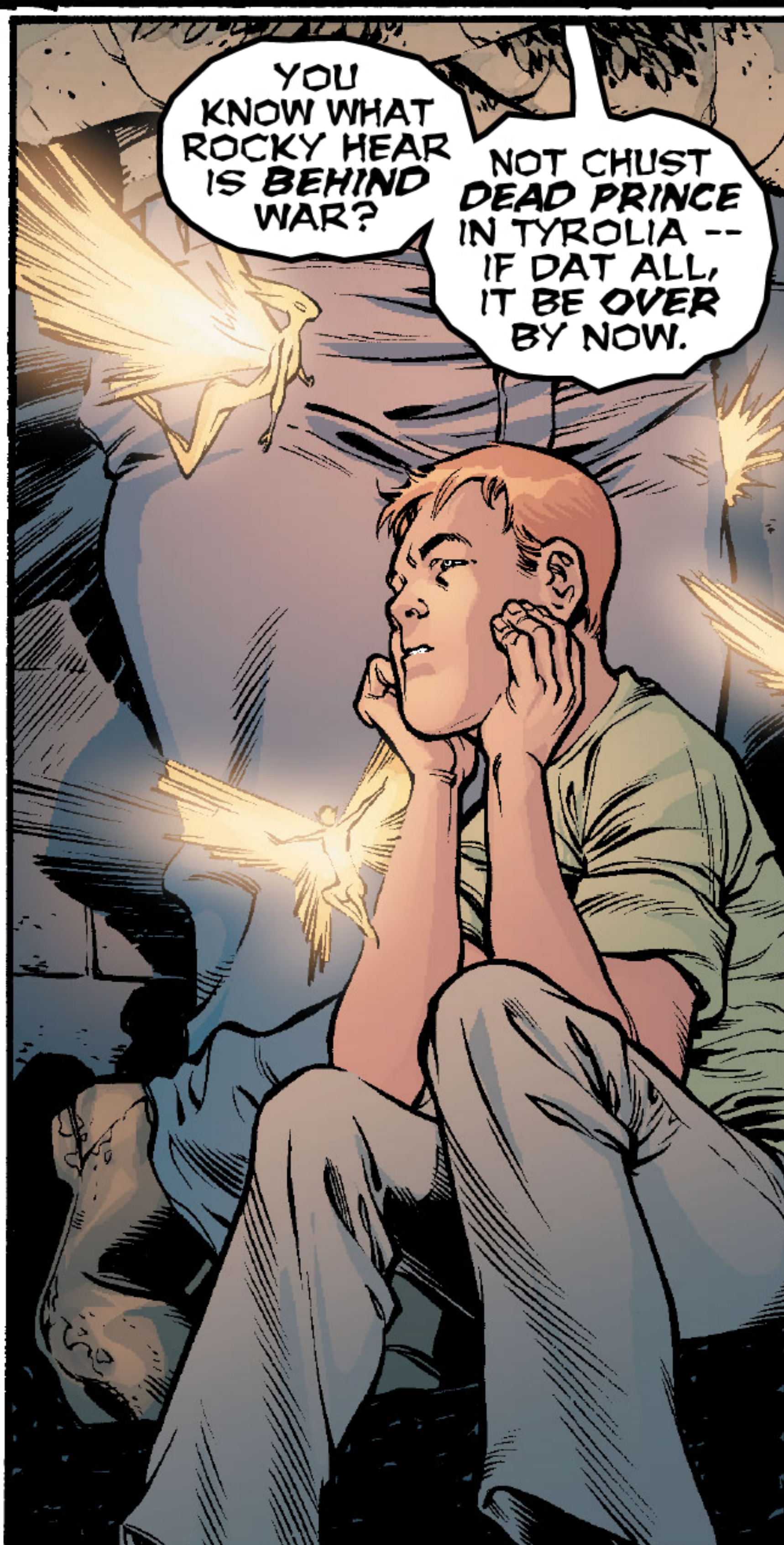


I GET OUT, COME TO
STATES OF COLUMBIA.
WHERE IS NO WAR, AND
IF PEOPLE SMART, NEVER
WILL BE. I START
NEW LIFE.

BUT THE
PRUSSAINS --
THEY'RE DOING
AWFUL THINGS! I READ
ABOUT VAMPIRES,
WEREWOLVES AND
WORSE, LET LOOSE
IN GALLIA!

LET
DEM.

DEY
DO WHAT
DEY WANT.
ROCKY STAY
HERE.

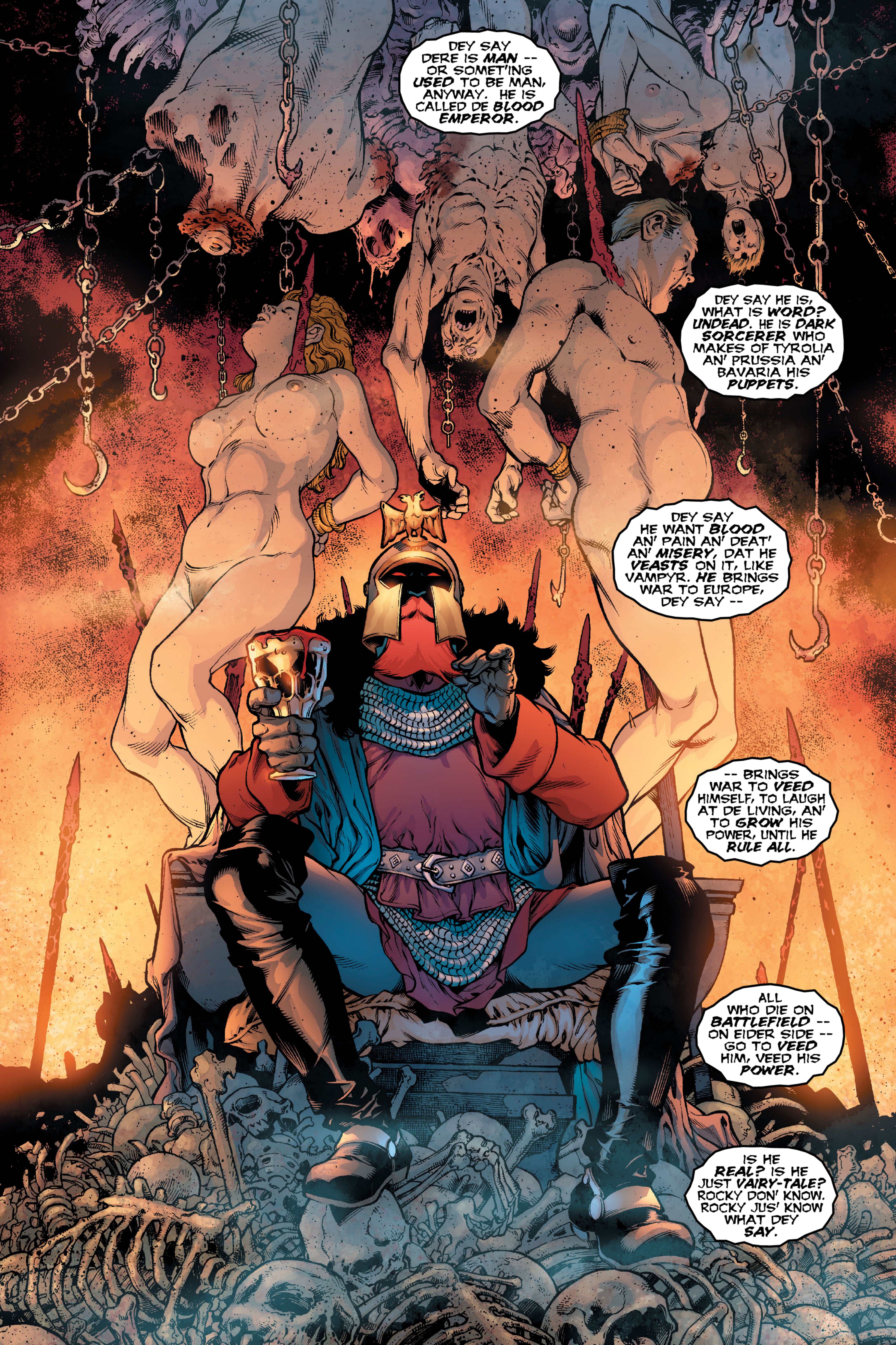


YOU
KNOW WHAT
ROCKY HEAR
IS BEHIND
WAR?

NOT CHUST
DEAD PRINCE
IN TYROLIA --
IF DAT ALL,
IT BE OVER
BY NOW.



NO,
DEY SAY IS
SOMET'ING
MORE...



DEY SAY
DERE IS MAN --
OR SOMET'ING
USED TO BE MAN,
ANYWAY. HE IS
CALLED DE BLOOD
EMPEROR.

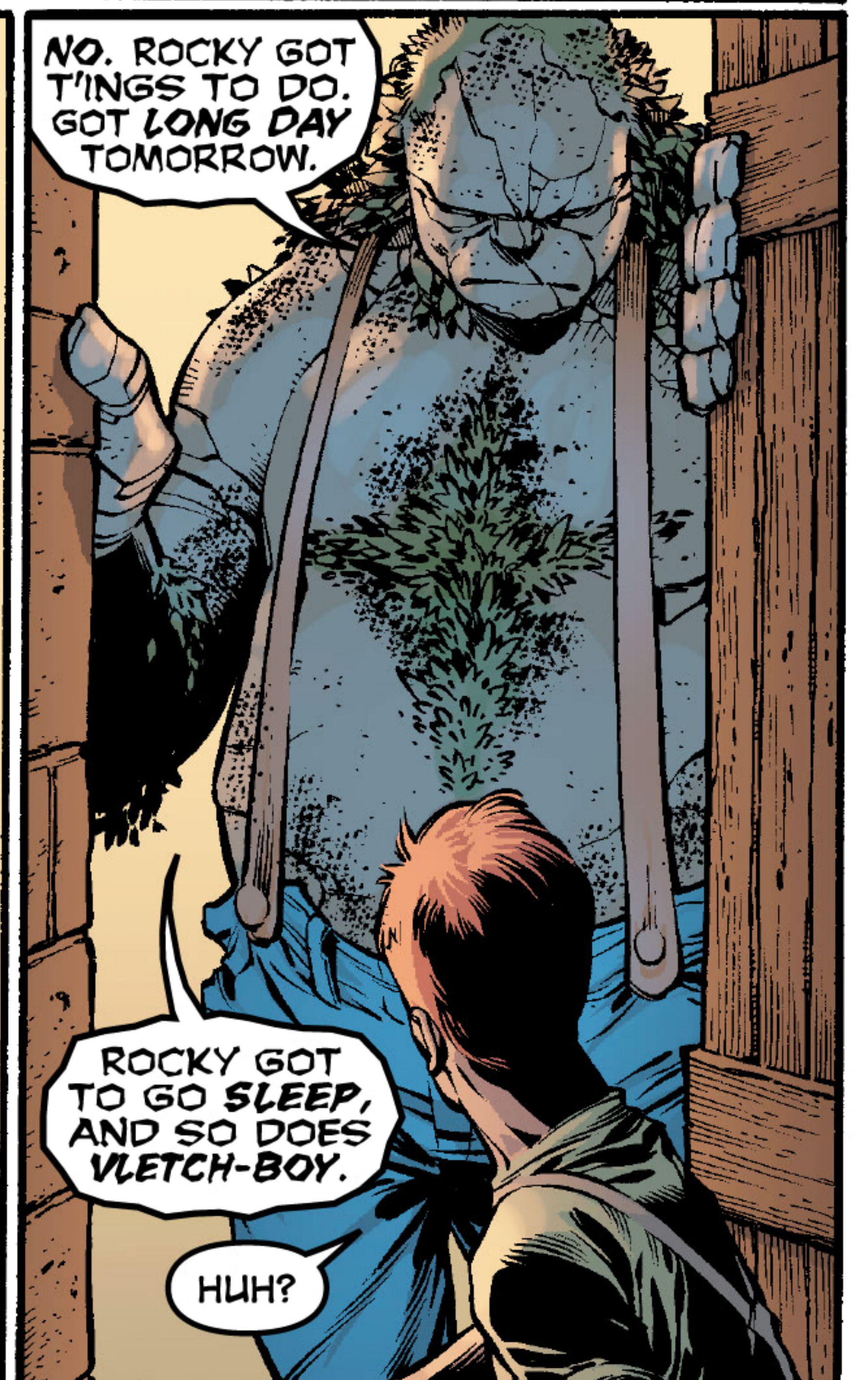
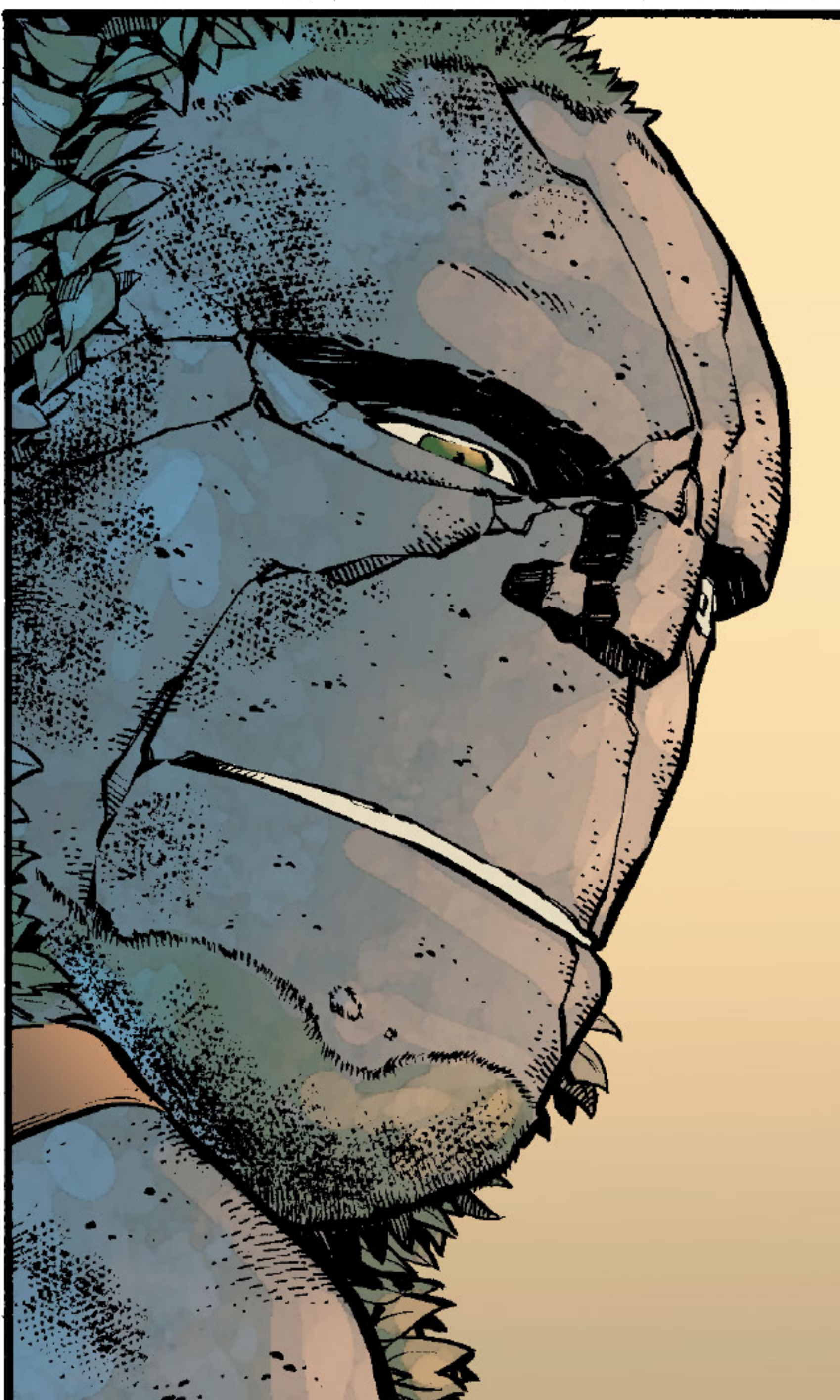
DEY SAY HE IS,
WHAT IS WORD?
UNDEAD. HE IS DARK
SORCERER WHO
MAKES OF TYROLIA
AN' PRUSSIA AN'
BAVARIA HIS
PUPPETS.

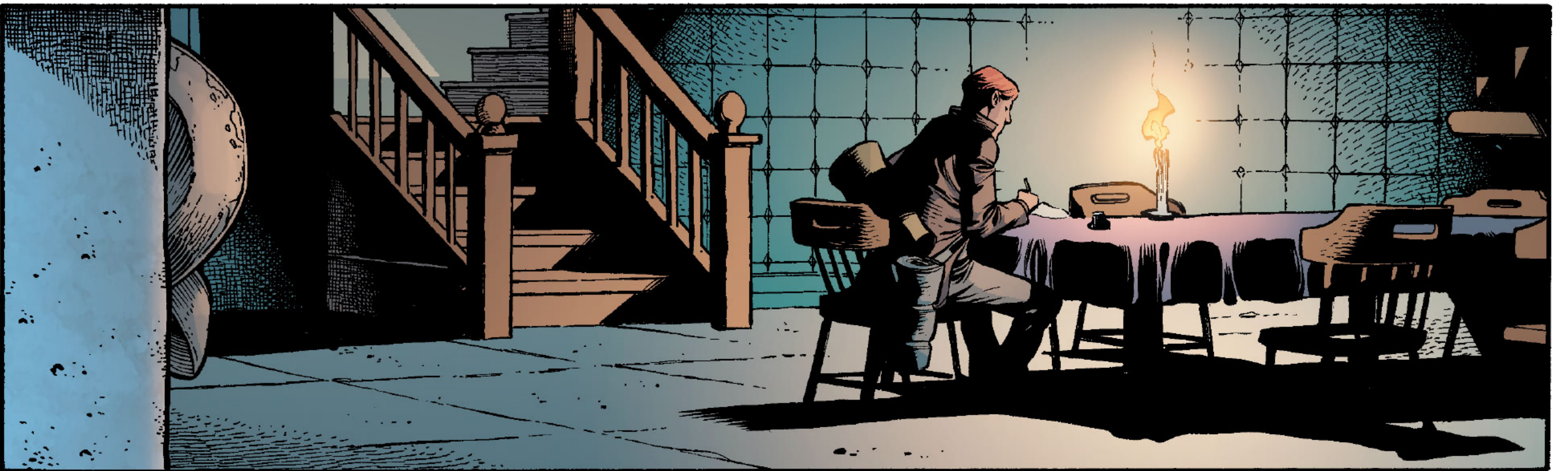
DEY SAY
HE WANT BLOOD
AN' PAIN AN' DEAT'
AN' MISERY, DAT HE
VEASTS ON IT, LIKE
VAMPYR. HE BRINGS
WAR TO EUROPE,
DEY SAY --

-- BRINGS
WAR TO VEED
HIMSELF, TO LAUGH
AT DE LIVING, AN'
TO GROW HIS
POWER, UNTIL HE
RULE ALL.

ALL
WHO DIE ON
BATTLEFIELD --
ON EIDER SIDE --
GO TO VEED
HIM, VEED HIS
POWER.

IS HE
REAL? IS HE
JUST VAIRY-TALE?
ROCKY DON' KNOW.
ROCKY JUS' KNOW
WHAT DEY
SAY.





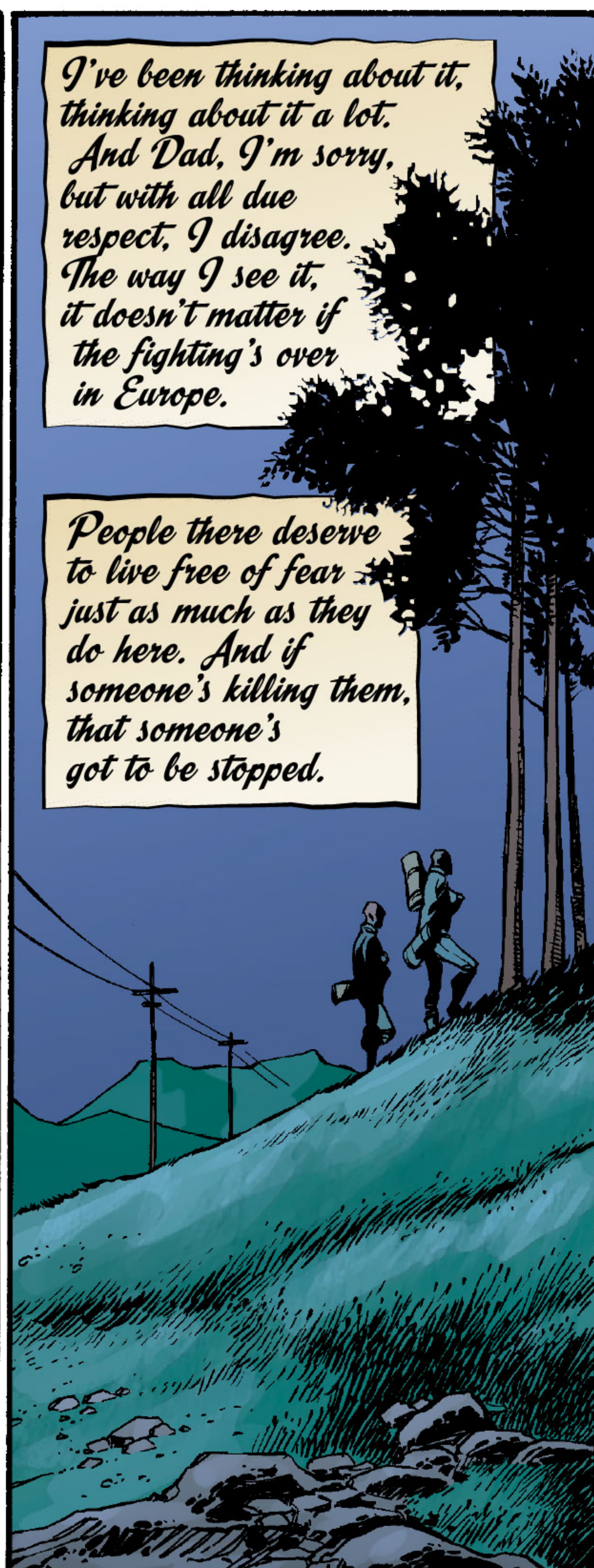


Dear Mom and Dad,
By the time you
read this, I'll be gone.
Me and Jonathan Kerry.

DIDN'T
THINK YOU'D
HAVE IT IN YOU.
READY?

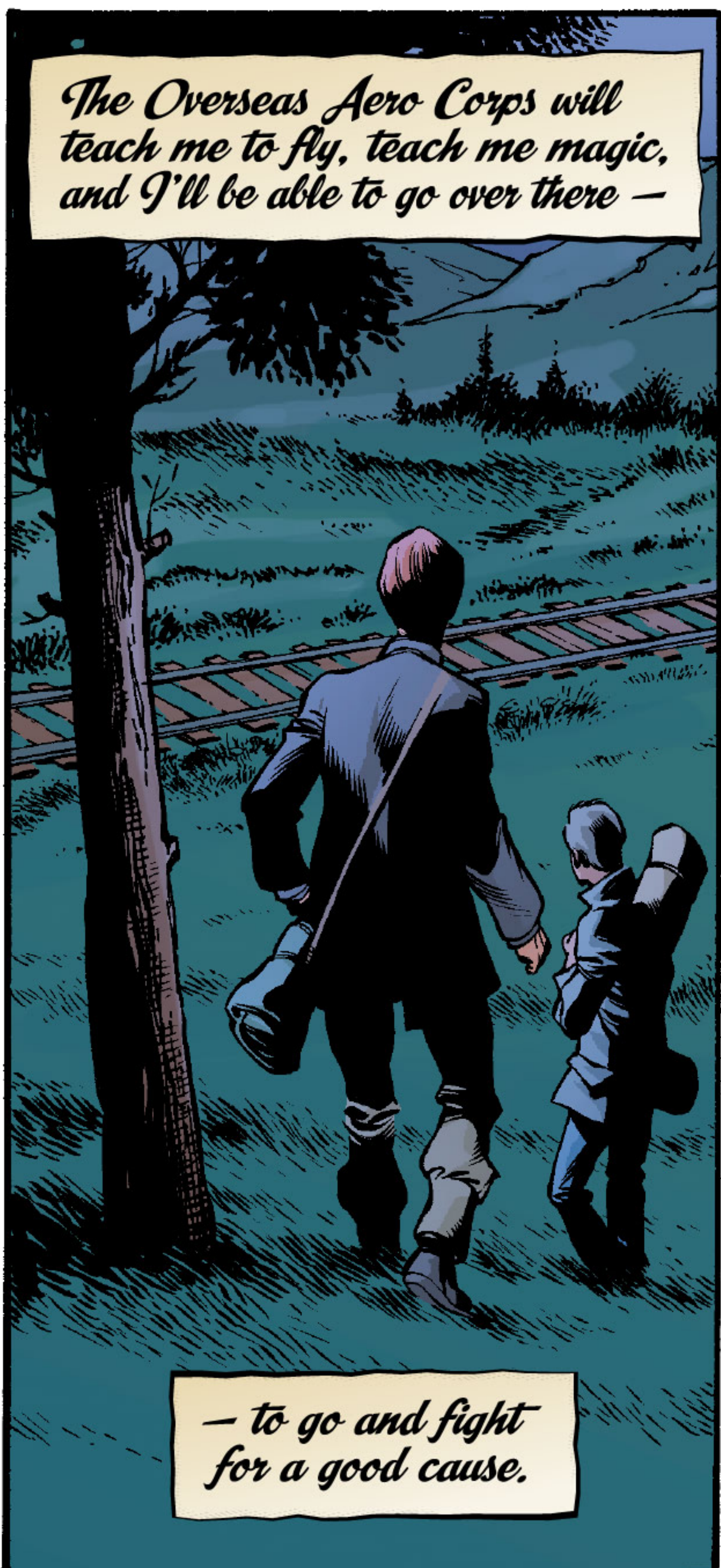
LET'S
GO.

We're going to join up.



I've been thinking about it,
thinking about it a lot.
And Dad, I'm sorry,
but with all due
respect, I disagree.
The way I see it,
it doesn't matter if
the fighting's over
in Europe.

People there deserve
to live free of fear
just as much as they
do here. And if
someone's killing them,
that someone's
got to be stopped.



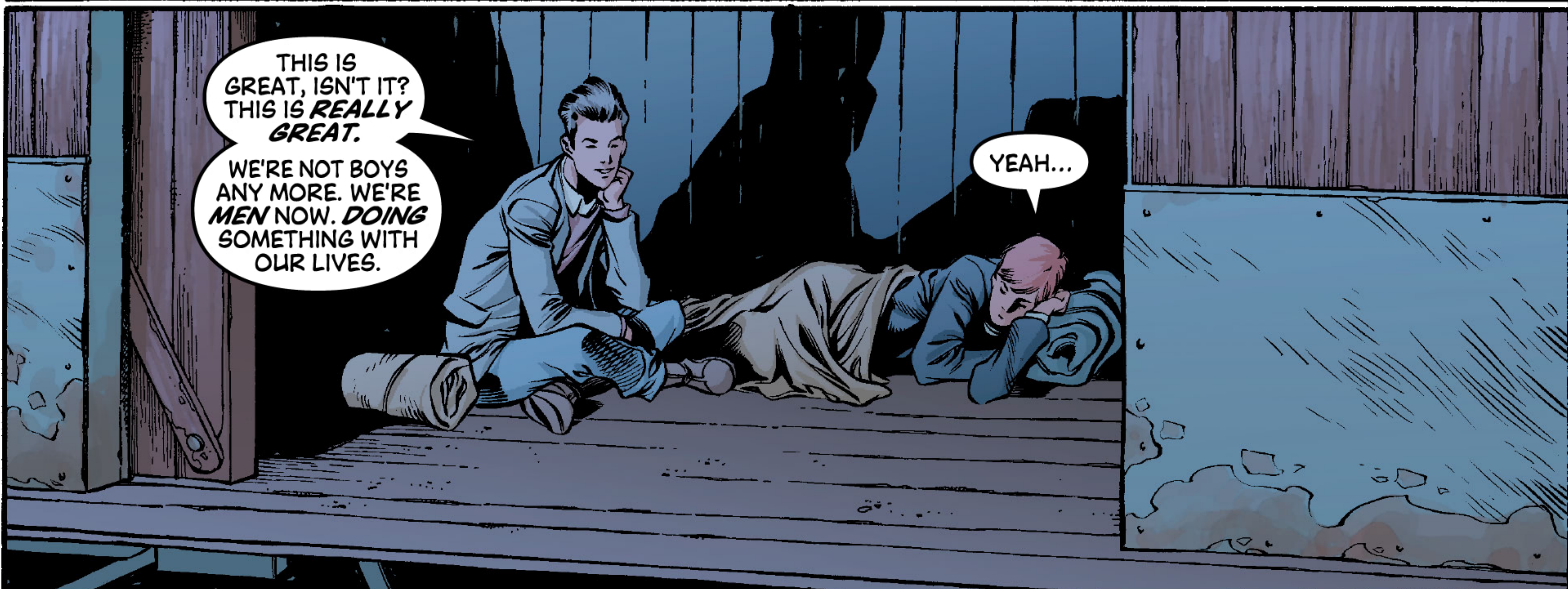
The Overseas Aero Corps will
teach me to fly, teach me magic,
and I'll be able to go over there —

— to go and fight
for a good cause.



I'll write when I'm settled, and
I'll get Jonathan to write his
folks, too. In the meantime,
don't worry about either of us.

We'll be fine,
trust me. And
we'll be doing
something
worth doing.



THIS IS GREAT, ISN'T IT? THIS IS **REALLY GREAT**. WE'RE NOT BOYS ANY MORE. WE'RE **MEN** NOW. **DOING** SOMETHING WITH OUR LIVES.

YEAH...

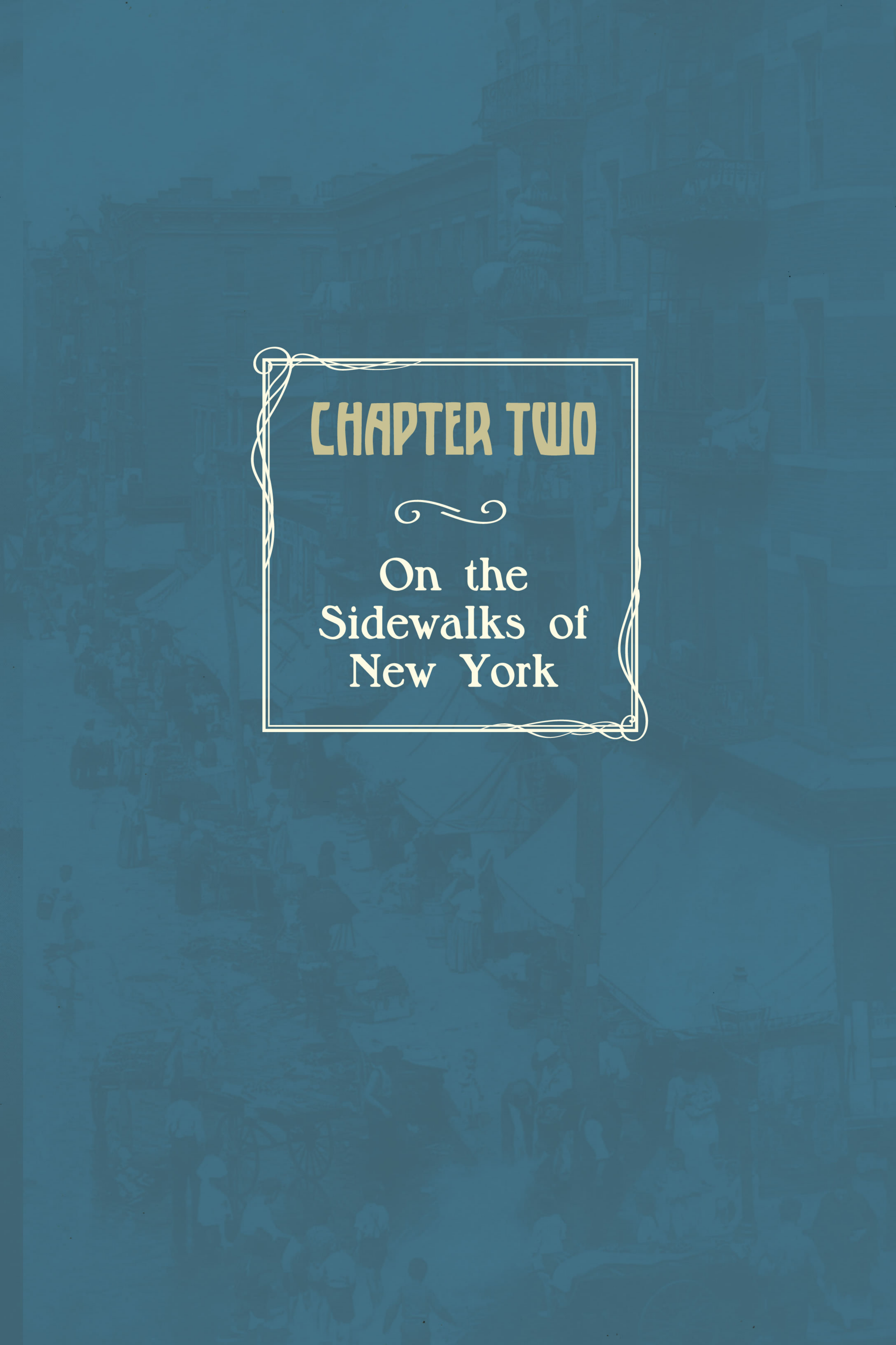


THAT'S THE PART THAT MAKES IT FEEL **RIGHT**, THAT MADE UP MY MIND. LEARNING TO FLY, THAT'LL BE **WONDERFUL**, BUT WE'RE NOT DOING THIS FOR THE FUN OF IT.

WE'RE DOING THIS BECAUSE IT **NEEDS** TO BE DONE. WE'RE GOING TO **ACCOMPLISH** SOMETHING -- GOING TO MAKE A **DIFFERENCE** IN THE WORLD.

WE'RE GOING TO **MATTER**.





CHAPTER TWO

On the
Sidewalks of
New York

New York City.
May 1915

Dear Mom and Dad,

You should see Manhattan Island.
You really should.

The size of it is just the start.
All Herbertsville could be tucked
in one corner and forgotten,
lost among the towers of brick
and stone.

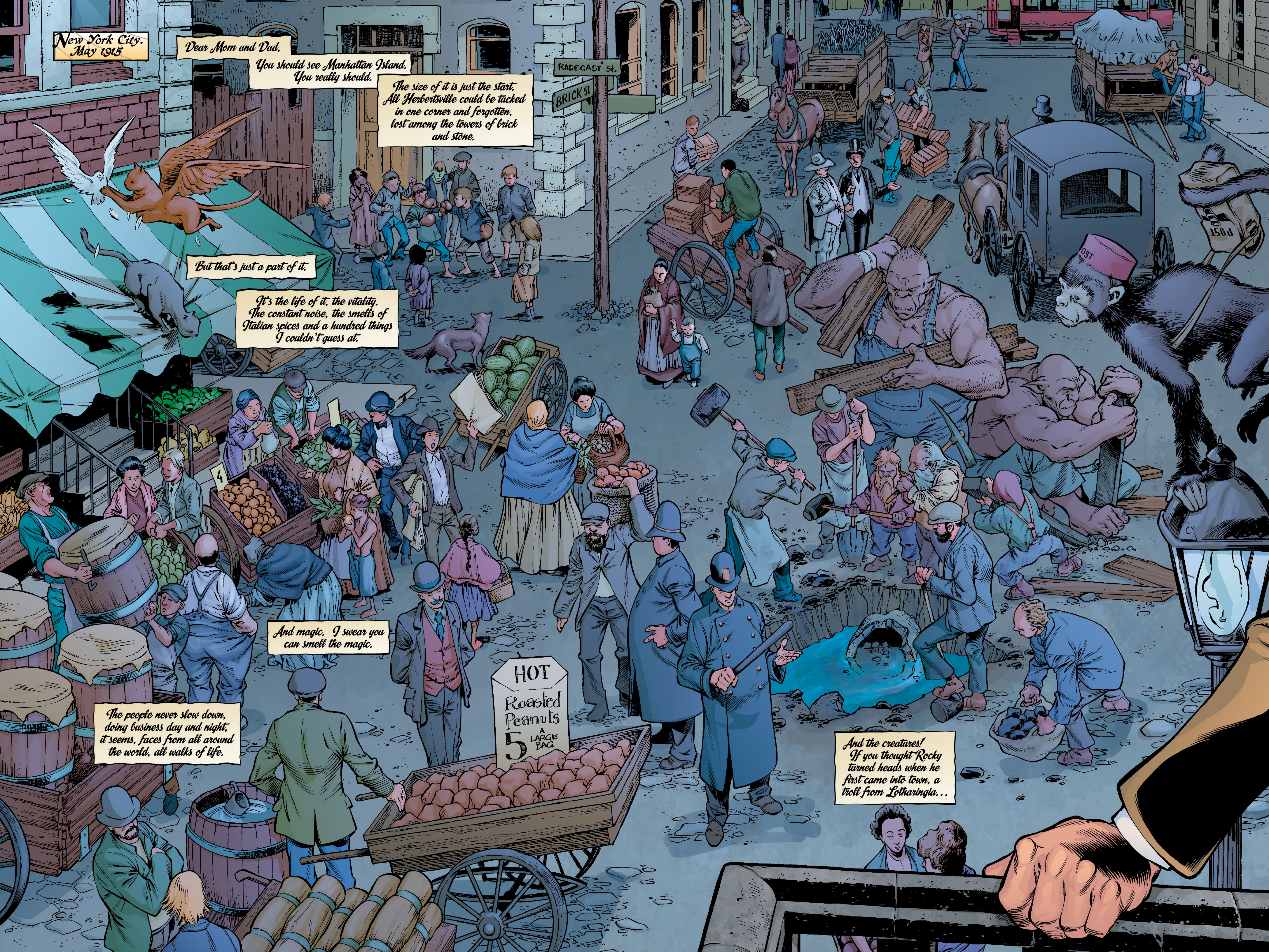
But that's just a part of it.

It's the life of it, the vitality.
The constant noise, the smells of
Italian spices and a hundred things
I couldn't guess at.

And magic. I swear you
can smell the magic.

The people never slow down,
doing business day and night,
it seems, faces from all around
the world, all walks of life.

And the creatures!
If you thought Rocky
turned heads when he
first came into town, a
troll from Lotharingia...





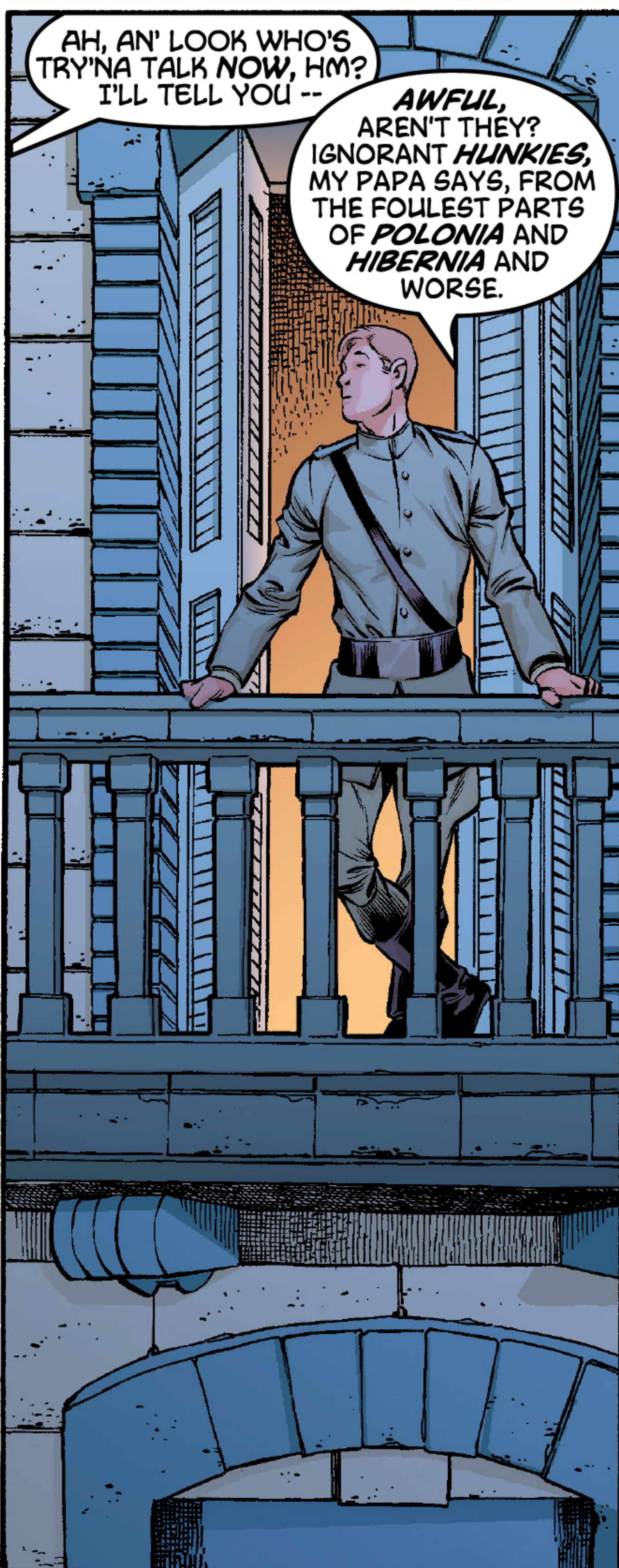
...why, here no one would even blink...

'S FAULTY
WORKM'NSHIP, NN.
DUG WRONG...

THE HELL!
POOR MATERIALS,
IT IS! BACK IN THE
AULD COUNTRY, PIPES
LIKE THIS'N BE GOOD A
THOUSAND YEAR
AN' MORE!

BUT A
HUMAN KNOWS
NAE MORE ABOUT
GOOD CLAY THAN
A STINKIN' RIVER
TROLL KNOWS
ABOUT --

NAH, NAH.
DWARF WATCH MOUTH,
DWARF NOT EAT HIM
TEETHS, HM?



AH, AN' LOOK WHO'S
TRY'NA TALK NOW, HM?
I'LL TELL YOU --

AWFUL,
AREN'T THEY?
IGNORANT **HUNKIES**,
MY PAPA SAYS, FROM
THE FOULEST PARTS
OF **POLONIA** AND
HIBERNIA AND
WORSE.

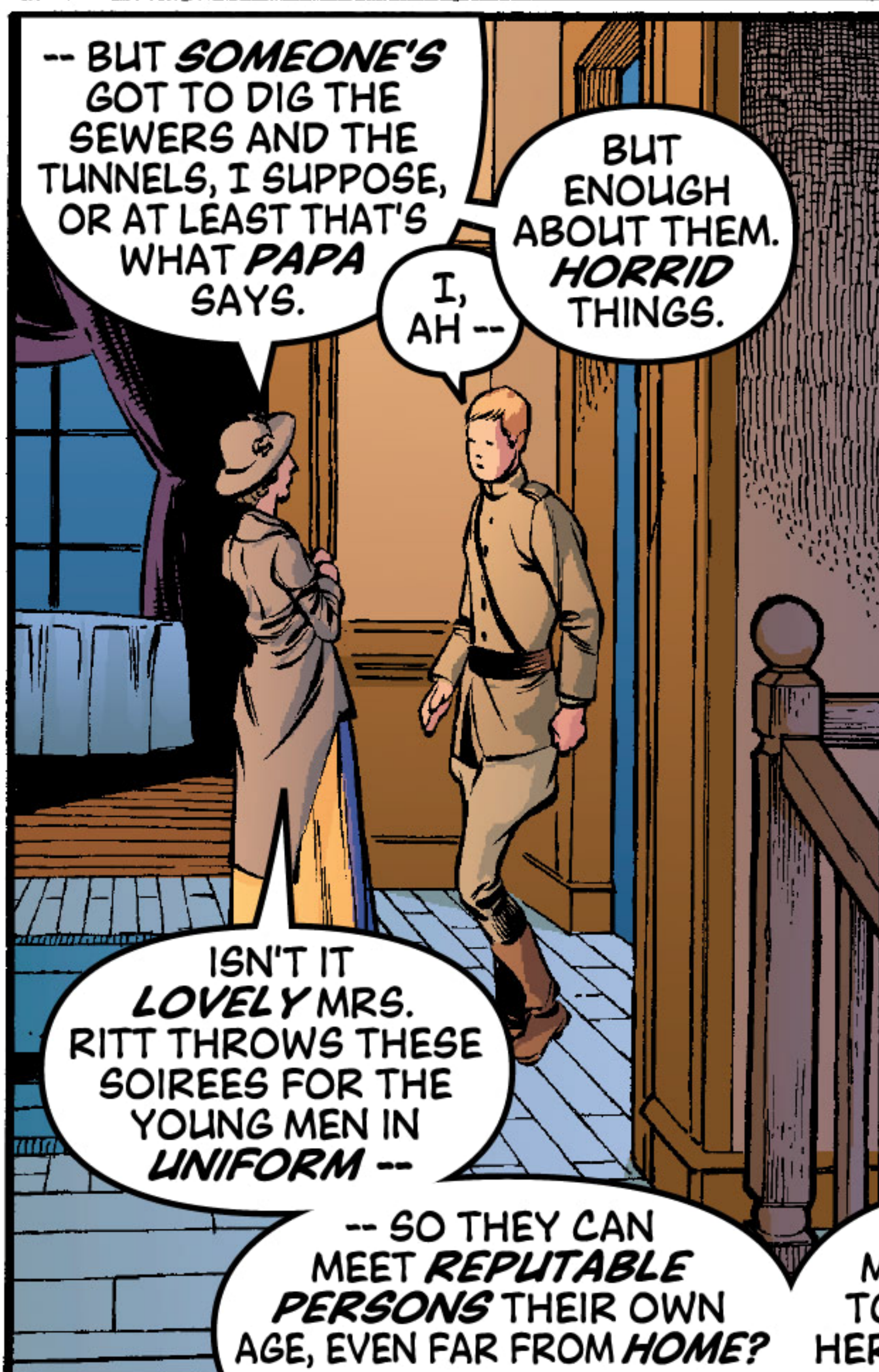


HM?
I DON'T --

BARELY SMART ENOUGH TO
FOLLOW **DIRECTIONS**,
MY PAPA SAYS --

-- BUT AT
LEAST THEY'RE
AS **STRONG** AS
THEY ARE
STUPID.

IT'S A **CRIME**
THEY GET TO LIVE
ALONGSIDE REAL
PEOPLE --



-- BUT **SOMEONE'S**
GOT TO DIG THE
SEWERS AND THE
TUNNELS, I SUPPOSE,
OR AT LEAST THAT'S
WHAT **PAPA**
SAYS.

I,
AH --

BUT
ENOUGH
ABOUT THEM.
HORRID
THINGS.

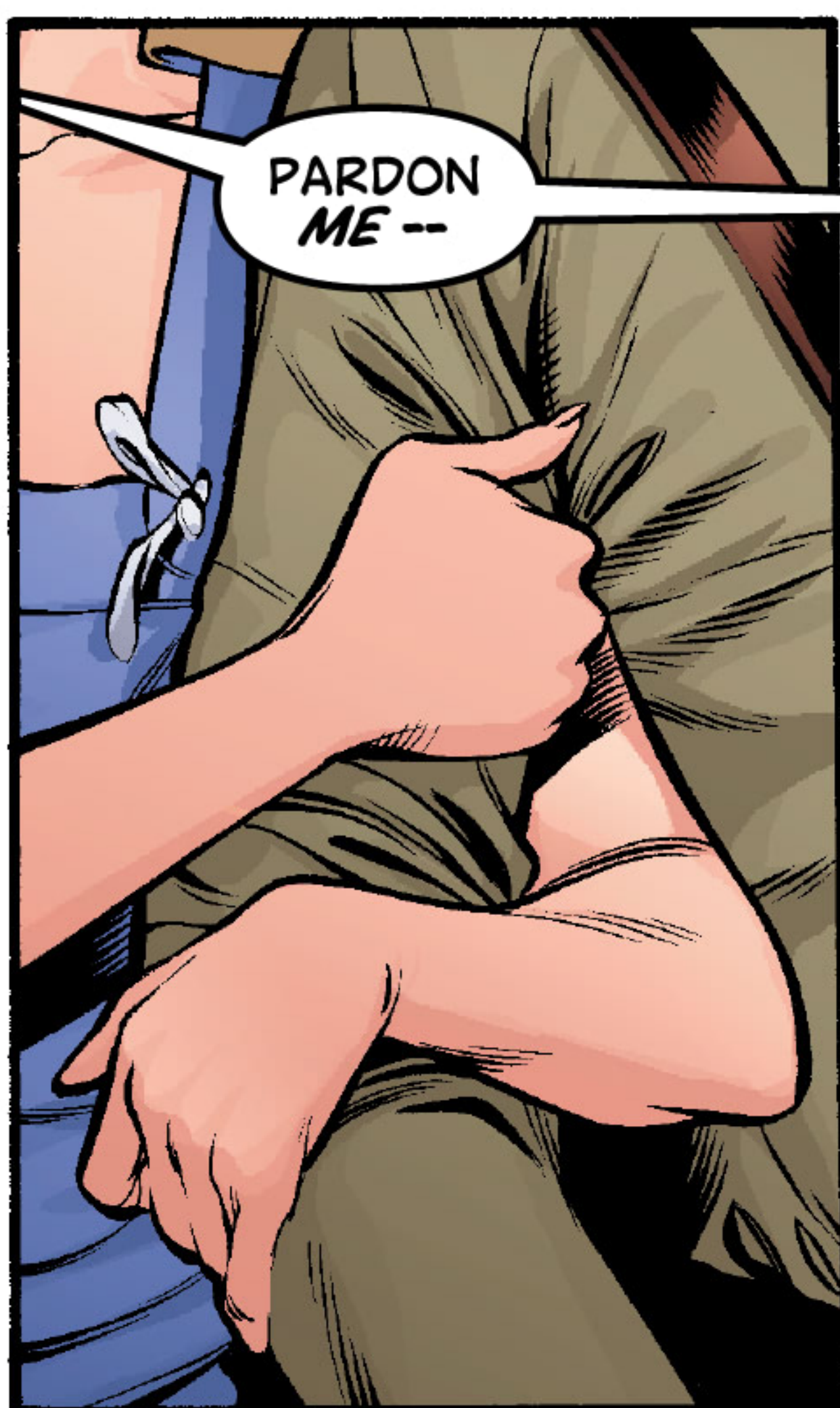
ISN'T IT
LOVELY MRS.
RITT THROWS THESE
SOIREES FOR THE
YOUNG MEN IN
UNIFORM --

-- SO THEY CAN
MEET **REPUTABLE**
PERSONS THEIR OWN
AGE, EVEN FAR FROM **HOME**?

SO A YOUNG
MAN COULD **TALK**
TO A GIRL, OR ASK
HER TO **DANCE**, OR --



ER,
WELL --



PARDON ME --

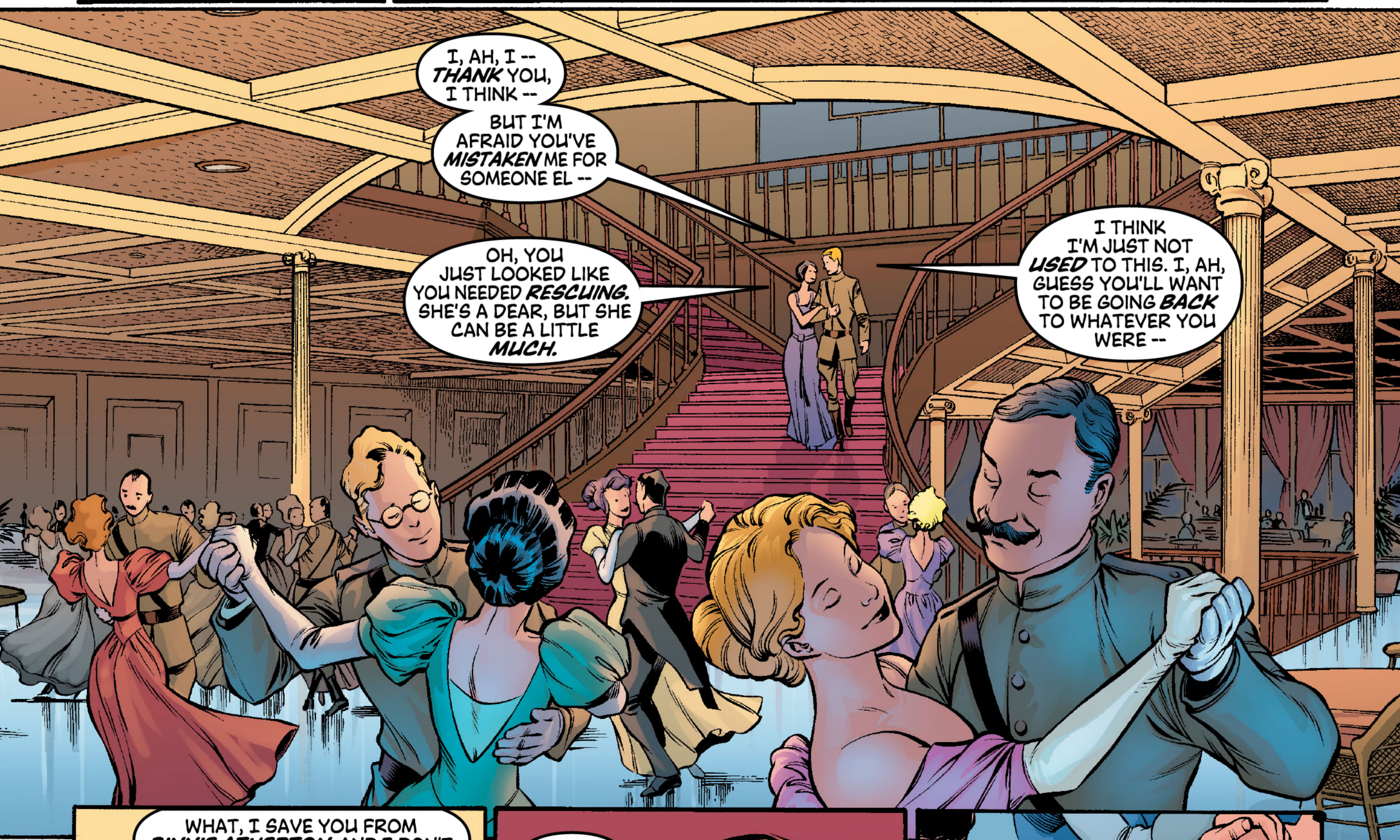


-- BUT I THINK IT'S TIME FOR THAT **DANCE** YOU PROMISED ME -- !

WHAT? BUT --

UH --

SORRY, BINNIE -- YOU KNOW HOW IT IS. **MUSIC'S** STARTING...



I, AH, I -- **THANK** YOU, I THINK --

BUT I'M AFRAID YOU'VE **MISTAKEN** ME FOR SOMEONE EL --

OH, YOU JUST LOOKED LIKE YOU NEEDED **RESCUING**. SHE'S A DEAR, BUT SHE CAN BE A LITTLE **MUCH**.

I THINK I'M JUST NOT **USED** TO THIS. I, AH, GUESS YOU'LL WANT TO BE GOING **BACK** TO WHATEVER YOU WERE --



WHAT, I SAVE YOU FROM **BINNIE** **ATHERTON**, AND I DON'T EVEN GET A **DANCE** OUT OF IT?

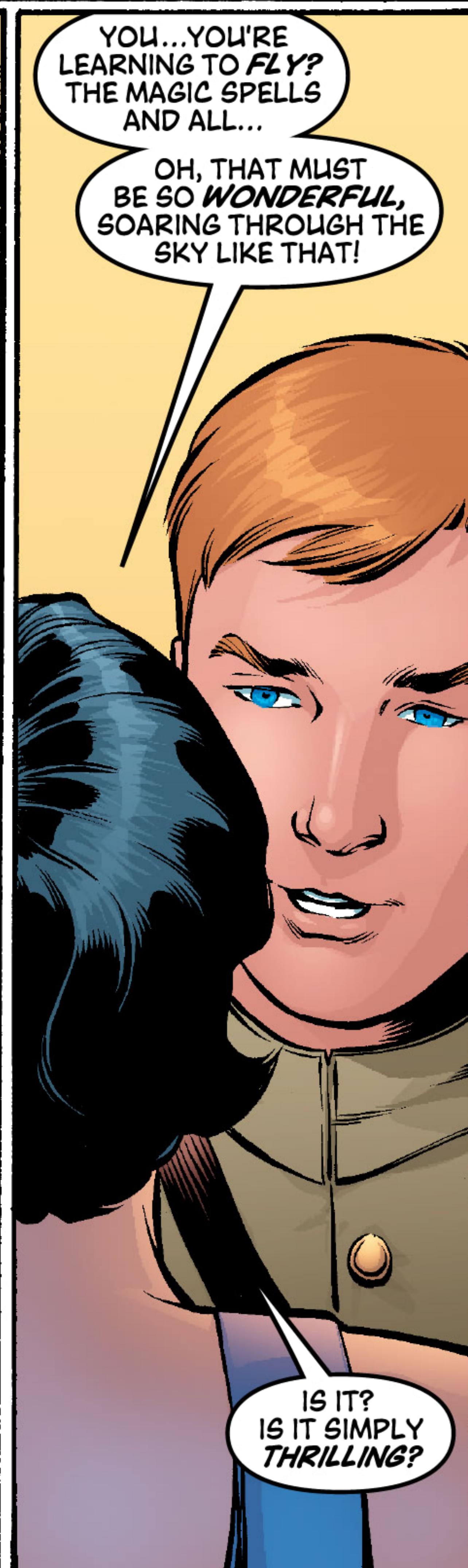
DO YOU INTEND TO MAKE A **LIAR** OUT OF ME, SIR?

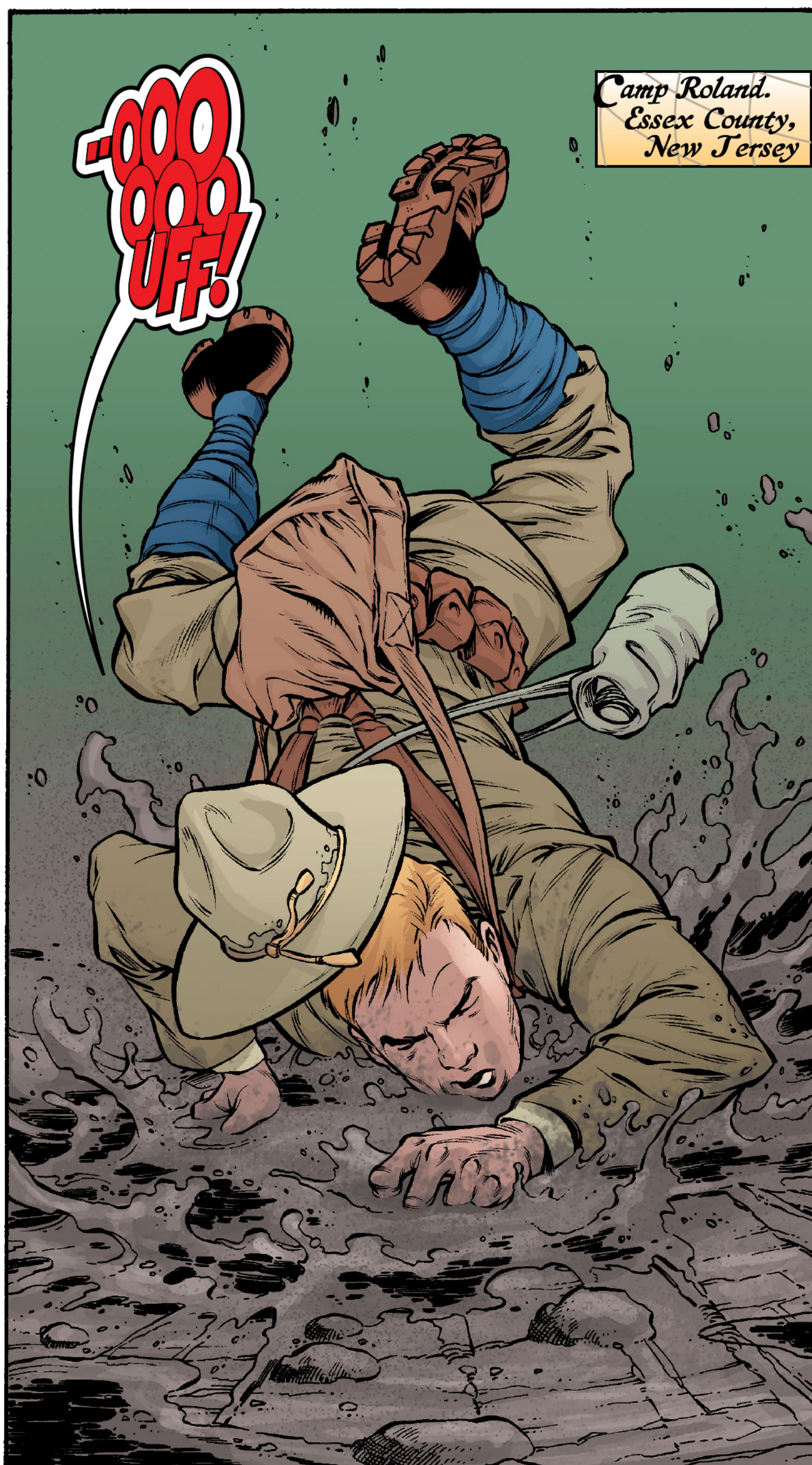


I -- NO, NO, OF **COURSE** NOT! **SHALL** WE?



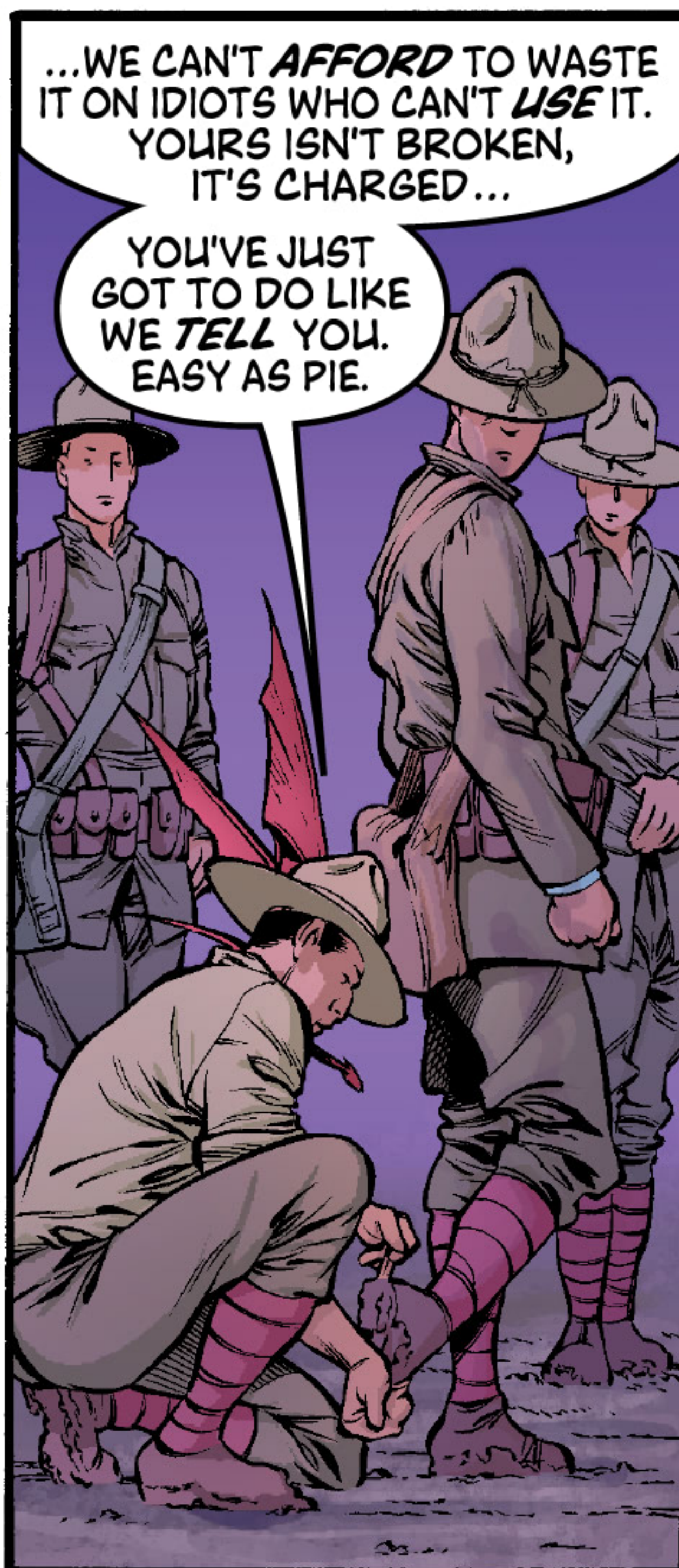
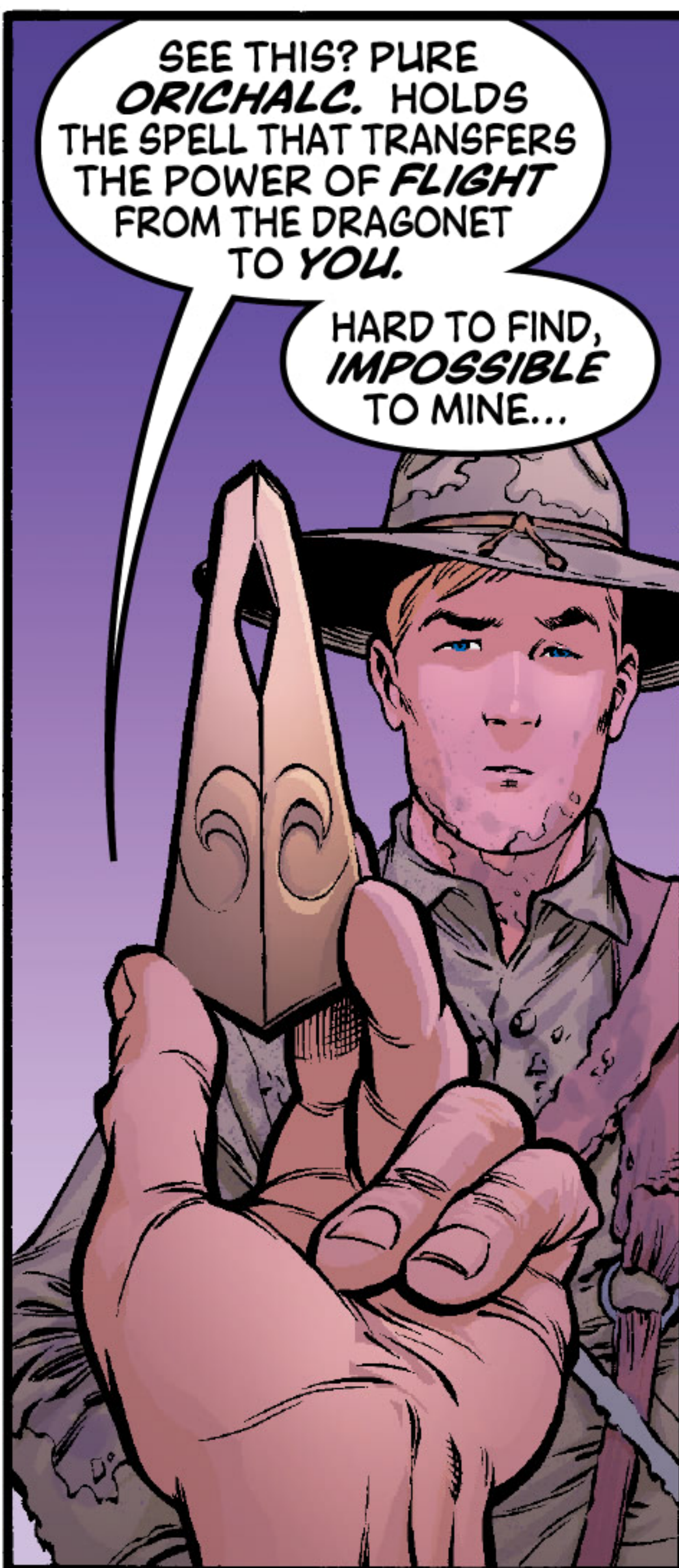
DELIGHTED.

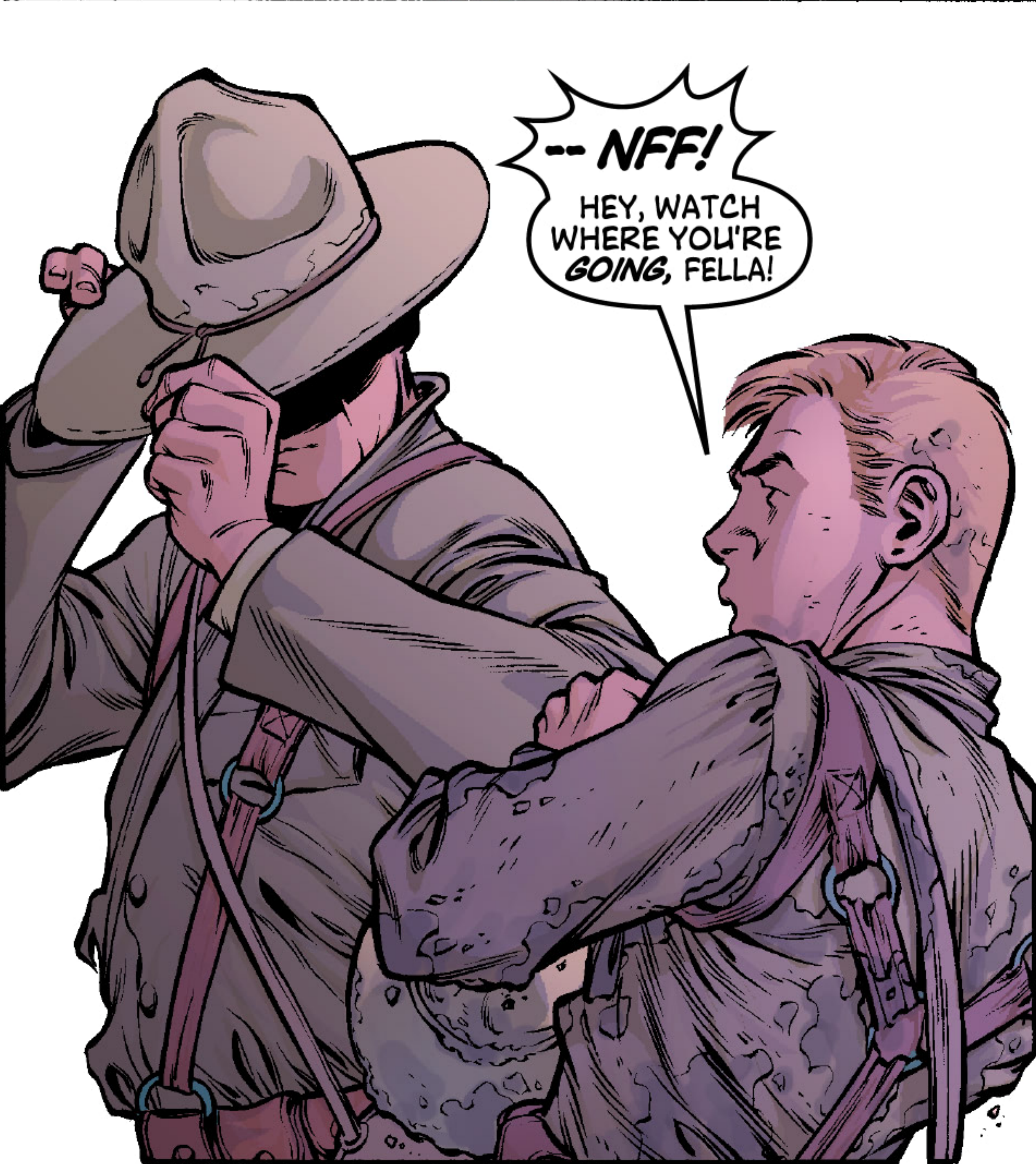
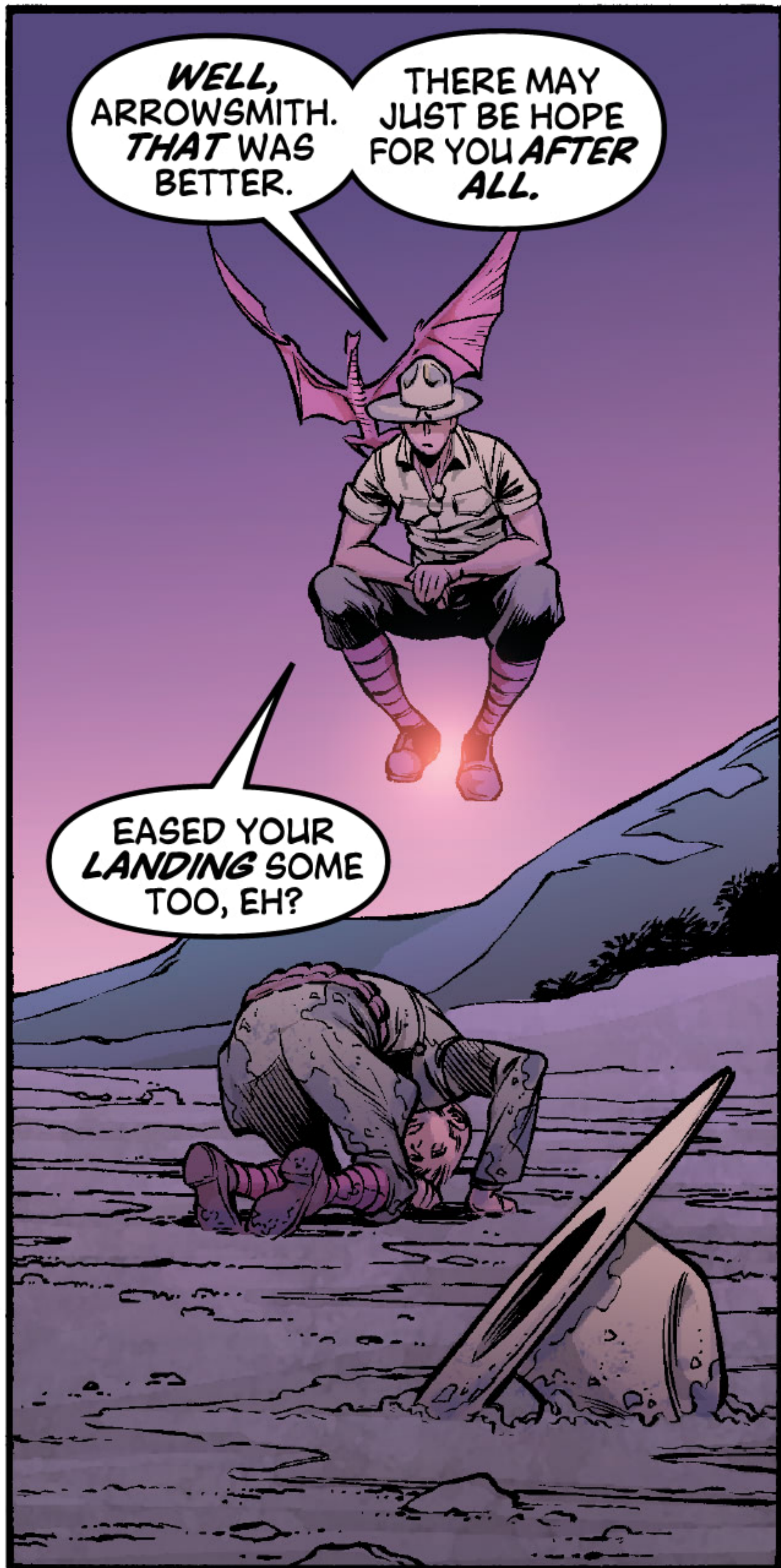
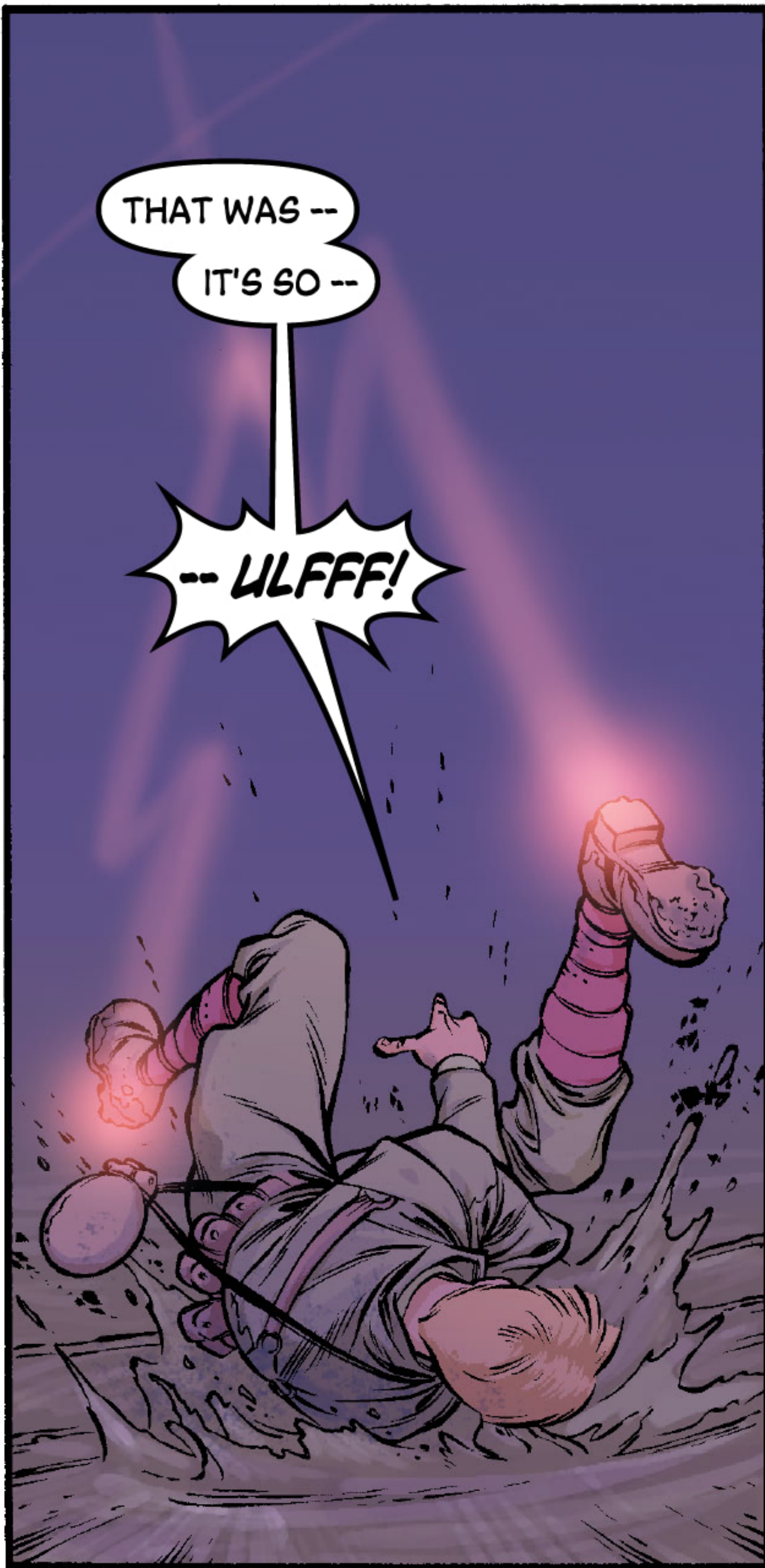


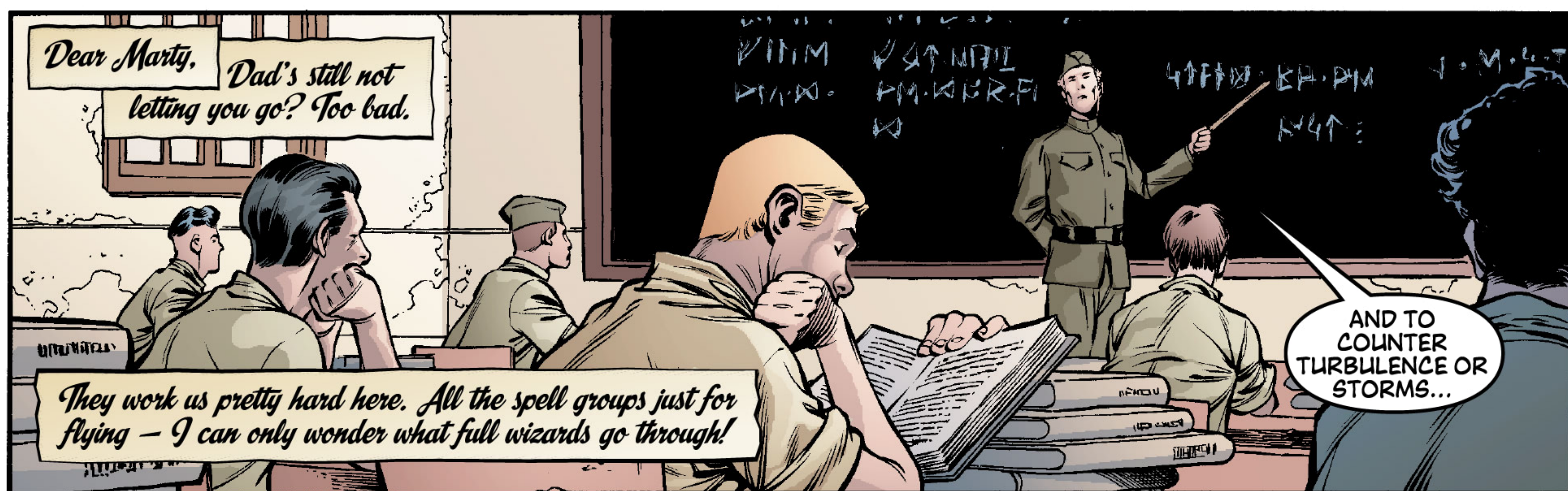


Camp Roland.
Essex County,
New Jersey





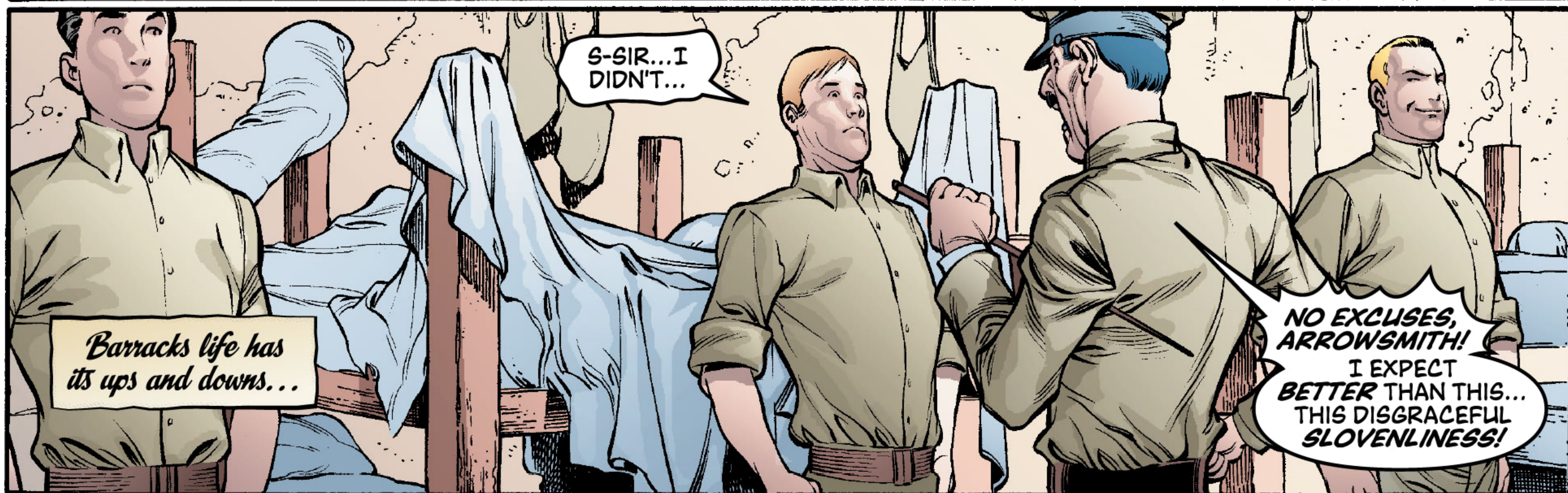




Dear Marty,
Dad's still not letting you go? Too bad.

They work us pretty hard here. All the spell groups just for flying – I can only wonder what full wizards go through!

AND TO COUNTER
TURBULENCE OR
STORMS...



S-SIR...I
DIDN'T...

Barracks life has
its ups and downs...

NO EXCUSES,
ARROWSMITH!
I EXPECT
BETTER THAN THIS...
THIS DISGRACEFUL
SLOVENLINESS!



...but however tough it may be at times,
it's worth anything to learn to fly!

TELL 'EM,
CADET.

LEAN
INTO IT,
JONATHAN.

GET ON
TOP OF IT,
YOU'LL
FEEL IT...



And the guys here
are good eggs. Mostly.

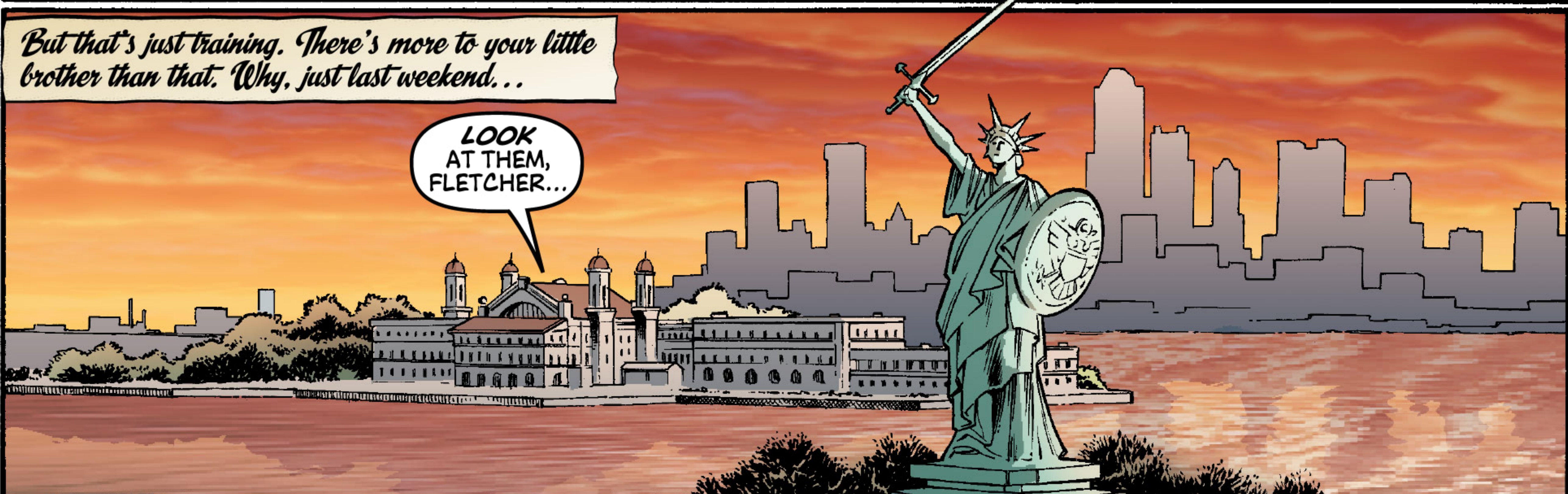
HAW!

GUESS I
DIDN'T SEE YOU,
BROWN-NOSE!

I SWEAR...
I'LL...

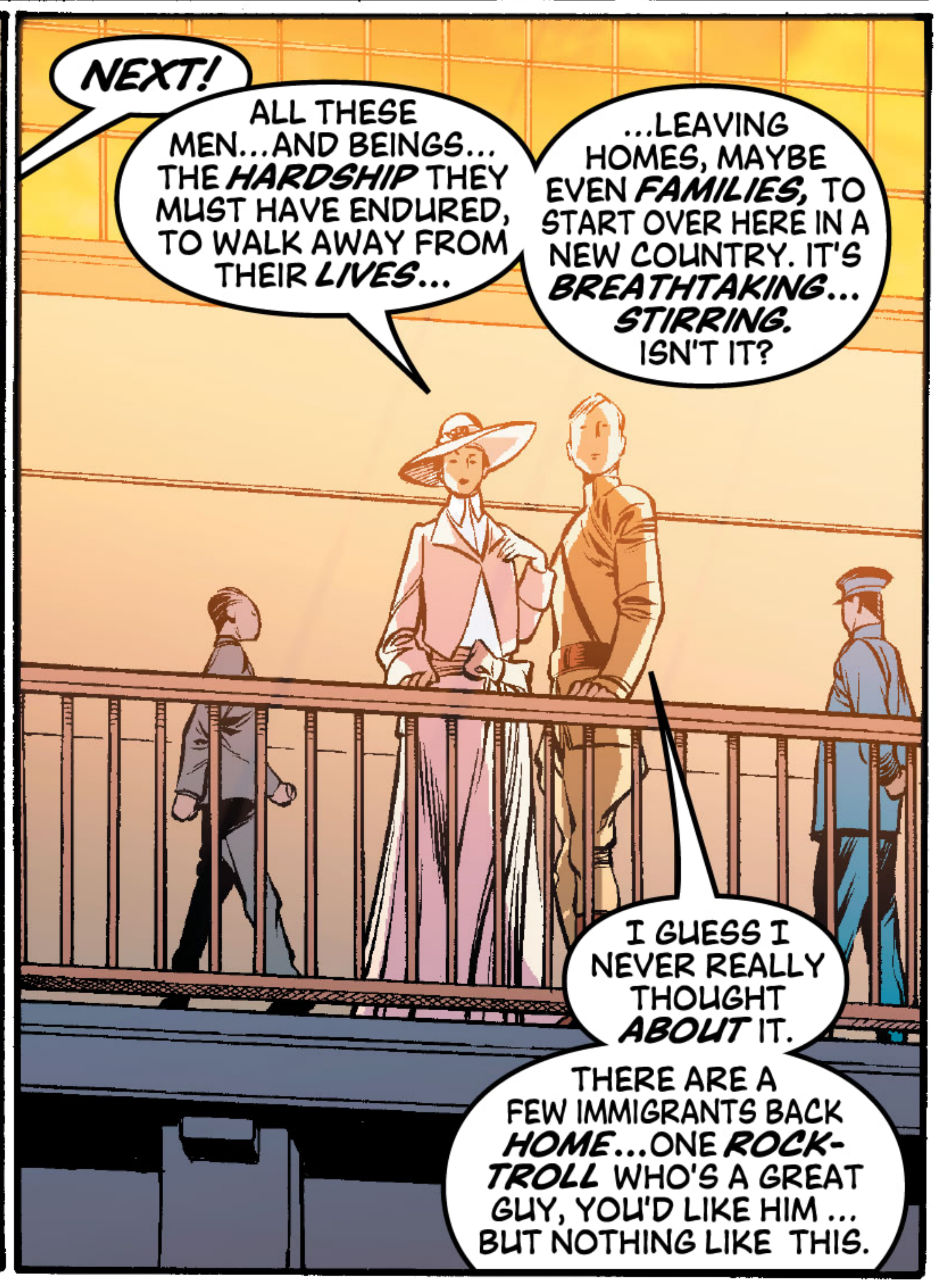
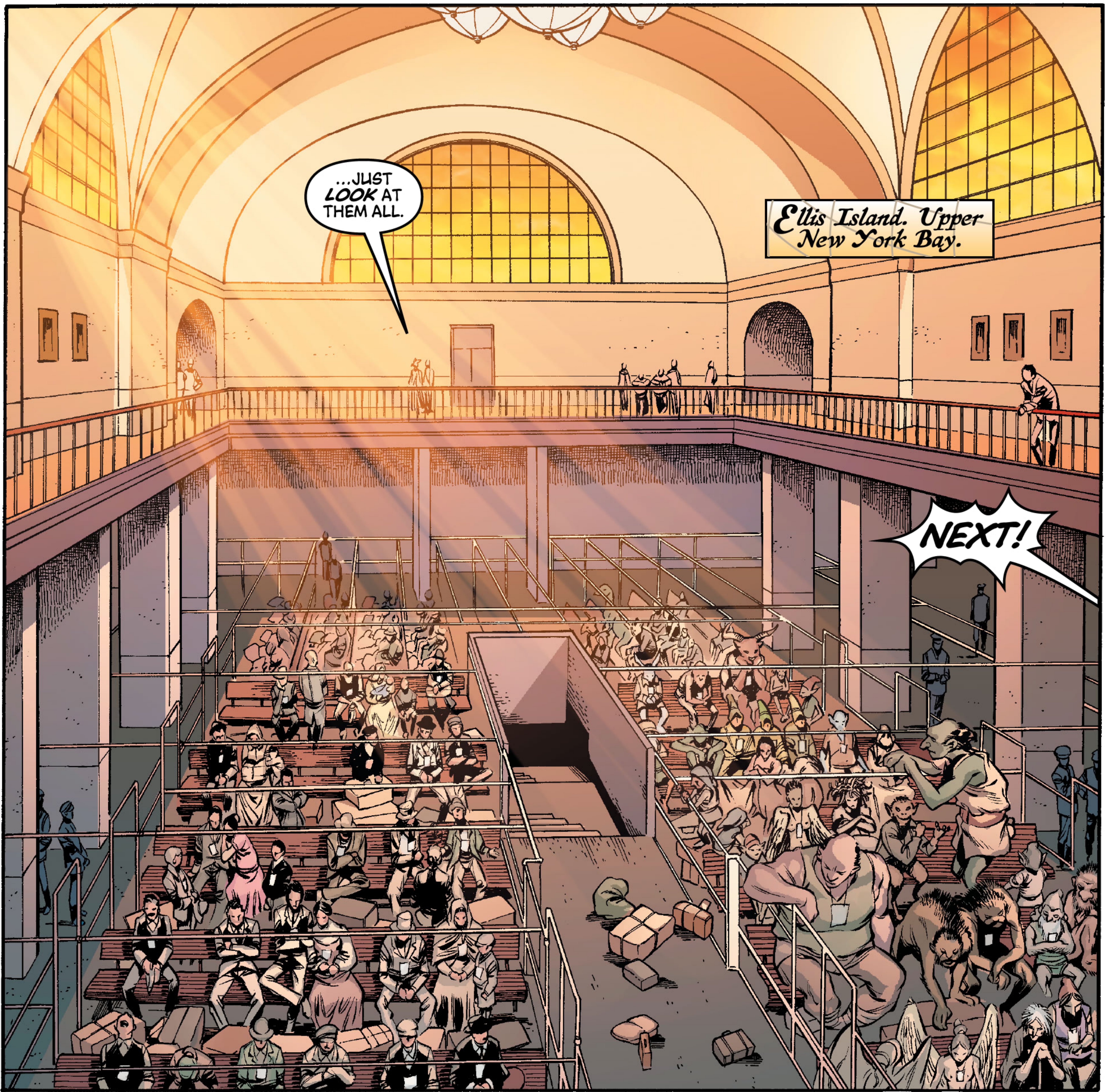
FLETCH, DON'T!
YOU'VE GOT A
WEEKEND
PASS!

HE KNOWS
YOU'LL LOSE IT IF
YOU GET IN A FIGHT!
JUST LET IT GO,
LET IT GO...



But that's just training. There's more to your little
brother than that. Why, just last weekend...

LOOK
AT THEM,
FLETCHER...





I JUST LOOK AT THEM, AND I KNOW WHAT A *SILLY, SPOILED, PAMPERED GIRL* I AM.

I'M A *HILLIARD*. I GREW UP IN LUXURY, NEVER WANTED FOR *ANYTHING*. WE'RE SUCH CHILDREN OF *PRIVILEGE*, YOU AND I...

...AND THOSE POOR CREATURES DOWN THERE BEAR UP UNDER BURDENS WE CAN BARELY *IMAGINE*. DON'T YOU AGREE?

WELL, I... *PRIVILEGE?* I DON'T...

BUT THEY'VE HAD IT PRETTY *TOUGH*, YES. SOME OF THEM, LIKE *ROCKY*, WHAT THEY'VE *SEEN* OVER THERE...



IT'S HUMBLING. I FEEL *USELESS*, LIKE NOTHING I DO MATTERS.

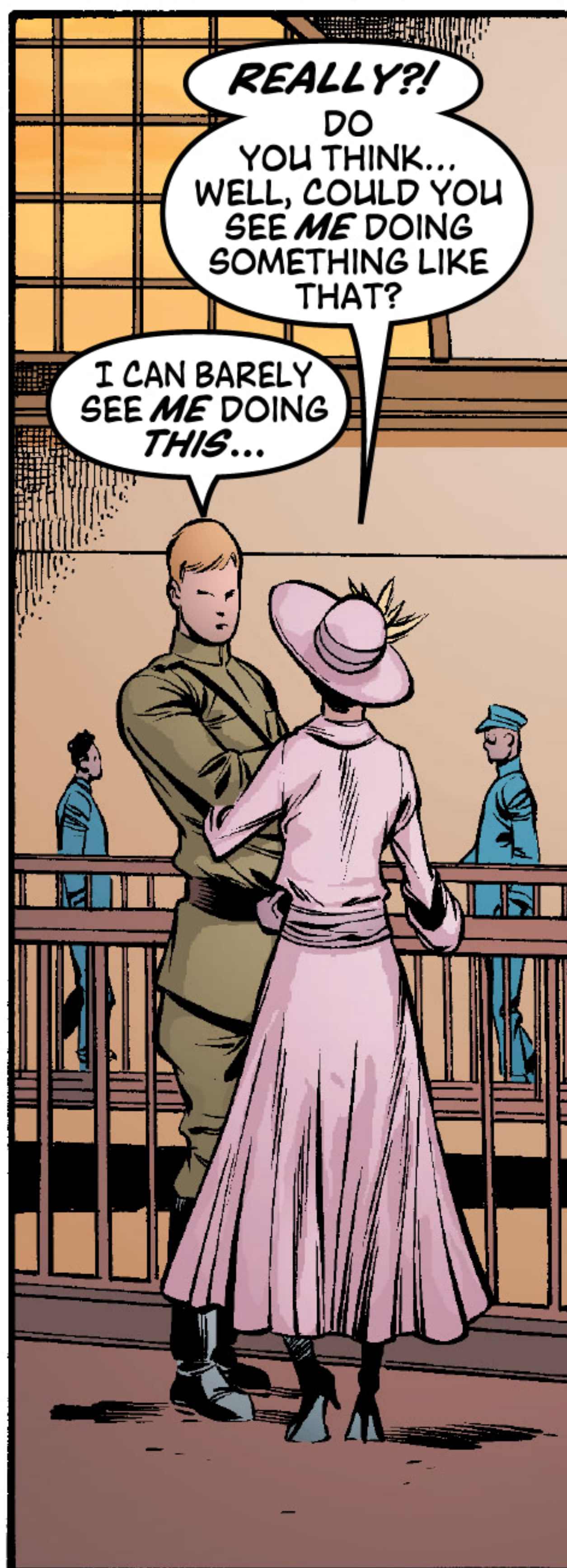
I'VE BEEN PART OF *CLOTHING* DRIVES, *FOOD* DRIVES, BUT IT FEELS LIKE SO *LITTLE*. I CAN'T VOLUNTEER AS A *SOLDIER*, HELP END THE WAR...

...BUT SURELY I CAN DO *MORE*.



I'M SURE WHAT YOU'RE DOING *HELPS*.

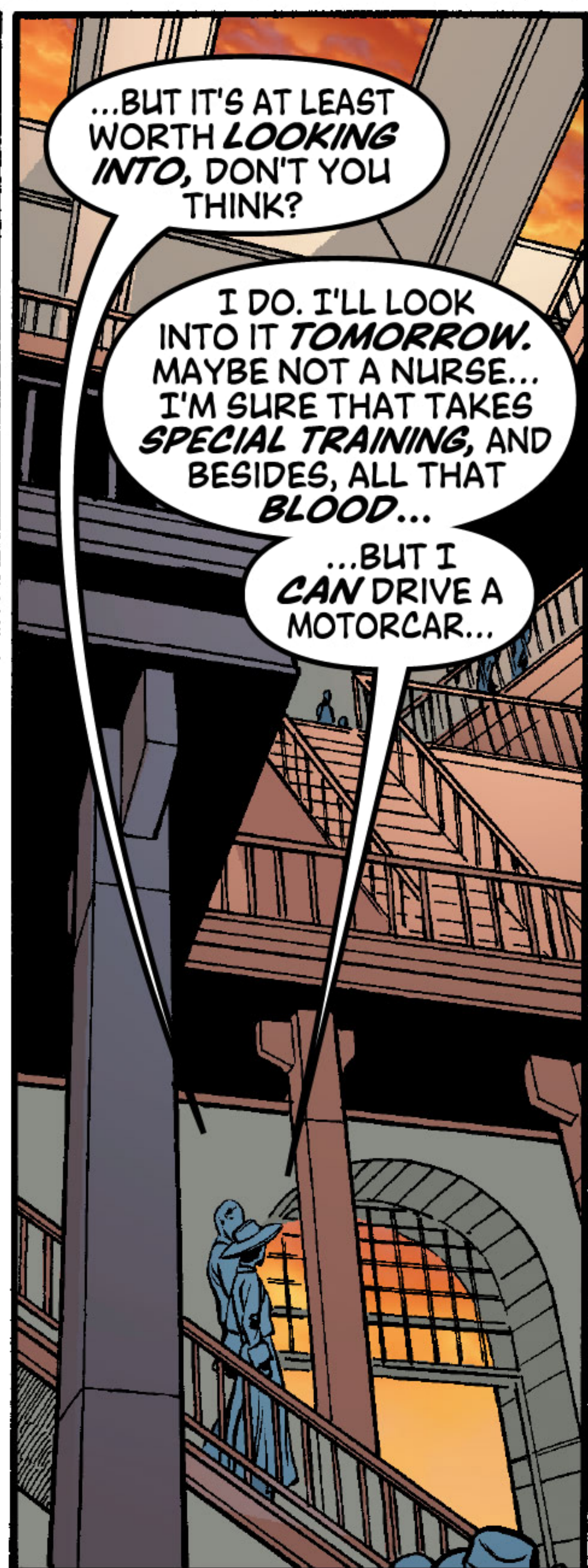
BUT I READ SOMEWHERE, ABOUT YOUNG WOMEN VOLUNTEERING AS *NURSES*, OR AS *AMBULANCE DRIVERS*...



REALLY?!

DO YOU THINK... WELL, COULD YOU SEE *ME* DOING SOMETHING LIKE THAT?

I CAN BARELY SEE *ME* DOING *THIS*...



...BUT IT'S AT LEAST WORTH *LOOKING INTO*, DON'T YOU THINK?

I DO. I'LL LOOK INTO IT *TOMORROW*. MAYBE NOT A *NURSE*... I'M SURE THAT TAKES *SPECIAL TRAINING*, AND BESIDES, ALL THAT *BLOOD*...

...BUT I *CAN* DRIVE A *MOTORCAR*...



FLETCH! GRACE! CONSTANCE AND I WERE WONDERING WHERE YOU'D *GOT TO!*

YOU SHOULD HAVE COME OVER TO THE *STATUE* WITH US. THE *VIEW* FROM THE *CROWN* -- !

UNNERVING WHEN SHE SHIFTS *POSITION*, THOUGH...

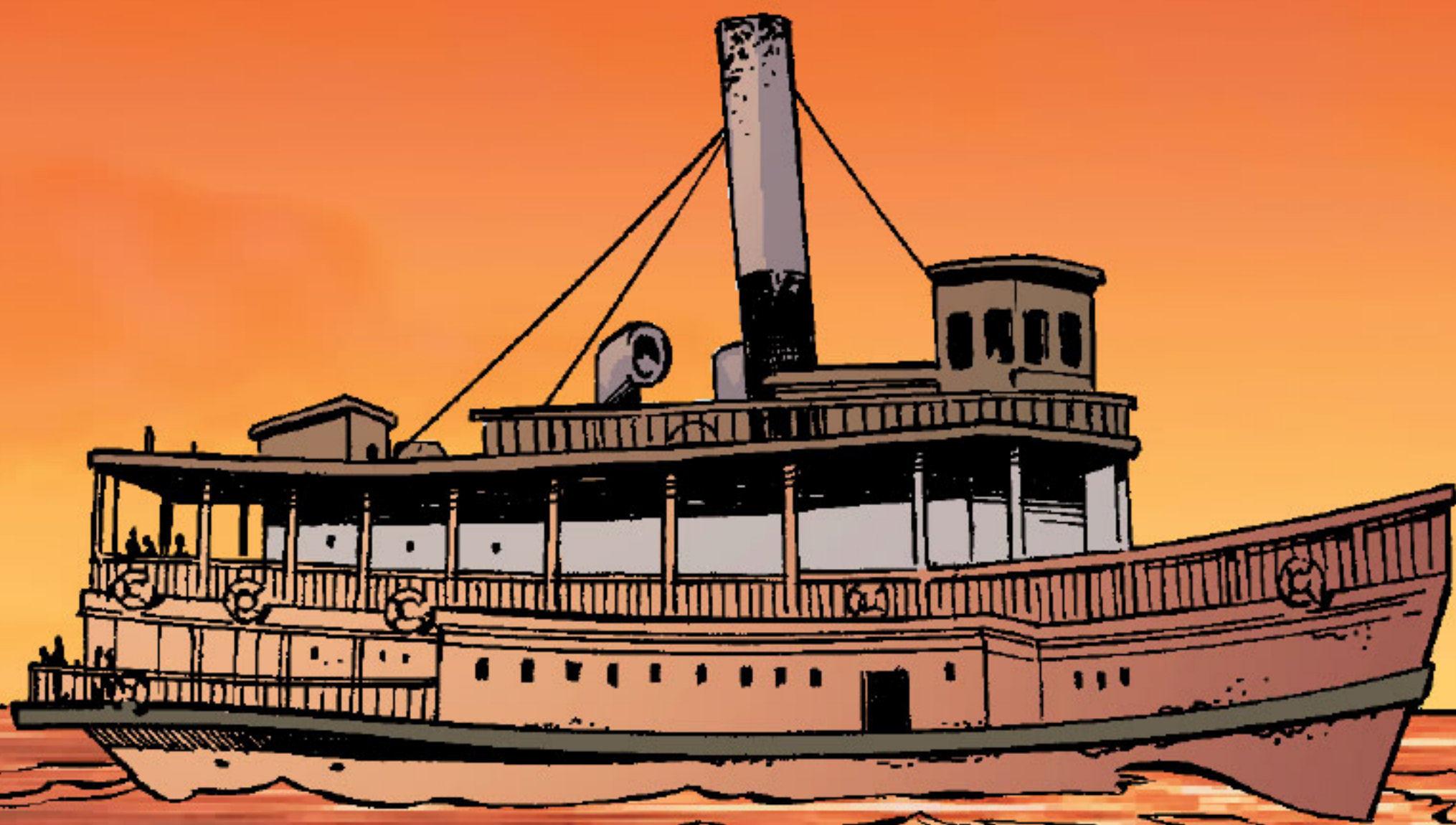


I'M IMPRESSED, FLETCH.

THAT GRACE -- SHE'S A REAL *HONEY*. NOTHING LIKE THE GIRLS BACK IN *HERBERTSVILLE*, THAT'S FOR SURE.

I DON'T KNOW.

I MEAN, *YES*, SHE'S WONDERFUL. SMART AND PRETTY AND *HONEST* AND...AND...BUT I FEEL LIKE SUCH A *FRAUD*.



SHE'S A *MILLIONAIRE'S* DAUGHTER -- THE *UPPER* OF THE UPPER CRUST -- AND I'VE GOT *CHARCOAL* UNDER MY FINGERNAILS.

SHE THINKS I'M AN OFFICER AND A *GENTLEMAN*...

WELL, AREN'T YOU?

OR AT LEAST, AREN'T YOU *ABOUT* TO BE ONE?

MAYBE. BUT IT FEELS *FAKE*, LIKE I'M JUST PRETENDING. THE OTHERS, THEY SEEM LIKE THE *REAL THING*, MOSTLY...

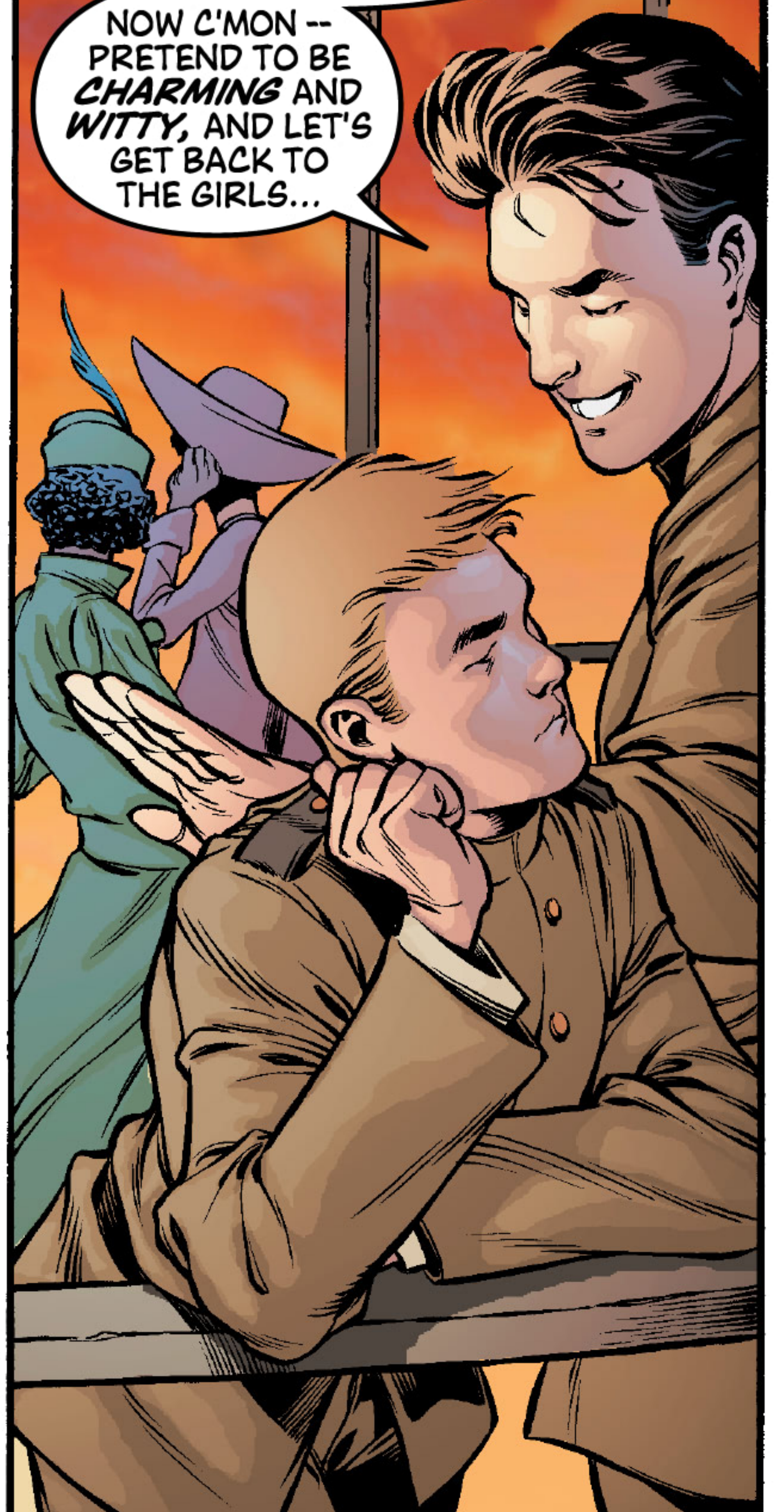
...BUT I'M JUST TRYING TO REMEMBER NOT TO SAY "*GEE*" AND "*OH BOY*" ALL THE TIME, EXPOSING MYSELF AS A *SMALL-TOWN HICK*.

AND WHO SAYS IT'S NOT THE SAME FOR *EVERYONE ELSE*, HM?

HUH?

YOU *WORRY* TOO MUCH, FLETCHER BOY. HASN'T IT EVER OCCURRED TO YOU THAT *EVERYONE* PRETENDS? THAT'S HOW THEY *LEARN* TO BE SOMETHING *NEW*.

NOW C'MON -- PRETEND TO BE *CHARMING* AND *WITTY*, AND LET'S GET BACK TO THE GIRLS...



Dear Gretch,
Hey, sis. I soloed today.
Soloed!

That means I flew on my own.
Totally on my own, in complete
control!

I know Dad doesn't like
to hear about this stuff,
but I had to tell someone.
You can show this to
Mom and Marty.

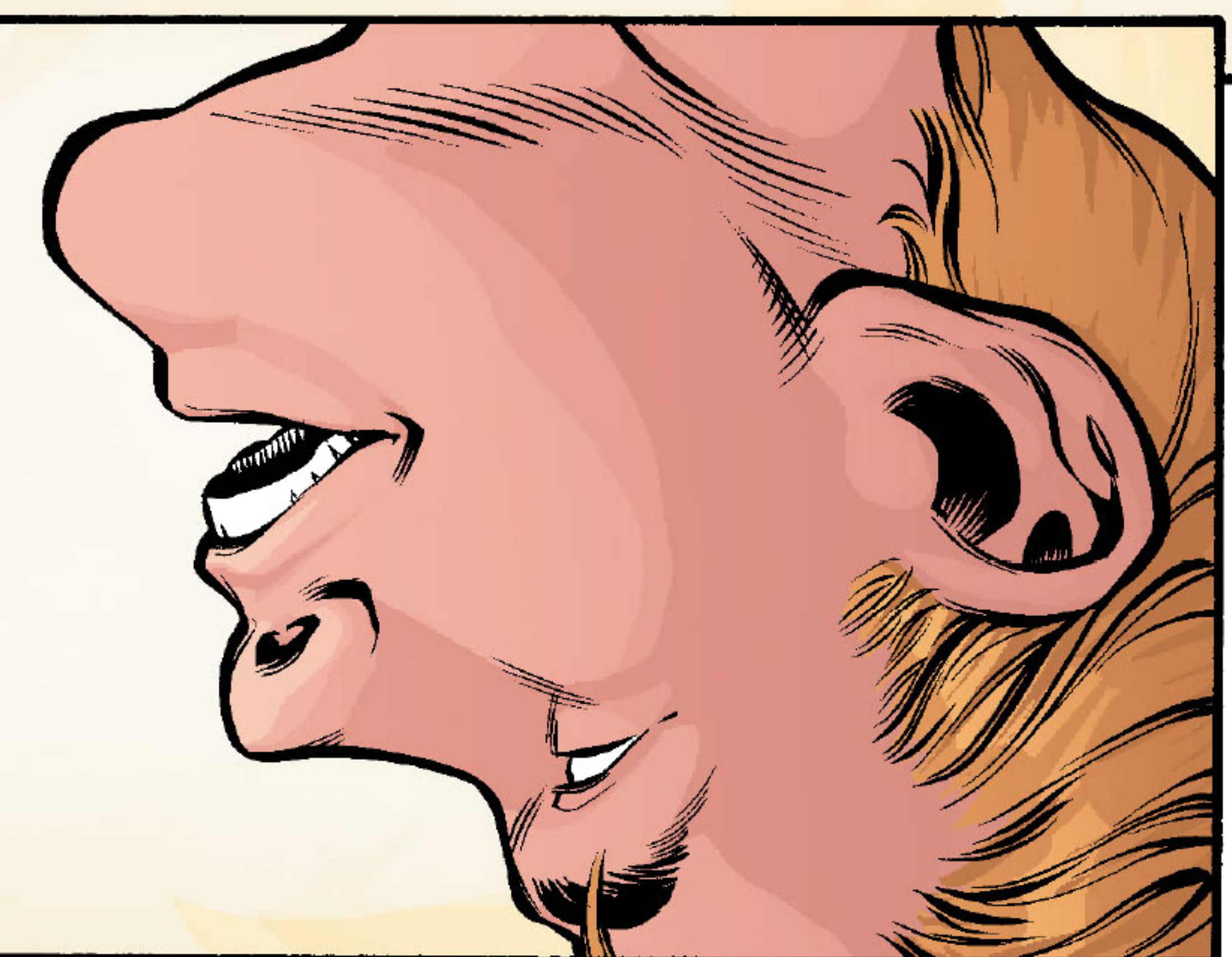
The way it works is,
the instructor —
Sergeant Jackson —
transfers a prana-charge
to my orichalc chips,
from his dragonet.

Like when we train,
but a larger charge,
and one that reacts
only to my commands.

Then it was all up to me,
from the launch spell on.
I can't describe how it
feels, but it's amazing —
I'll have to take you up,
when I'm home.

It was only temporary.
Only fifteen minutes.

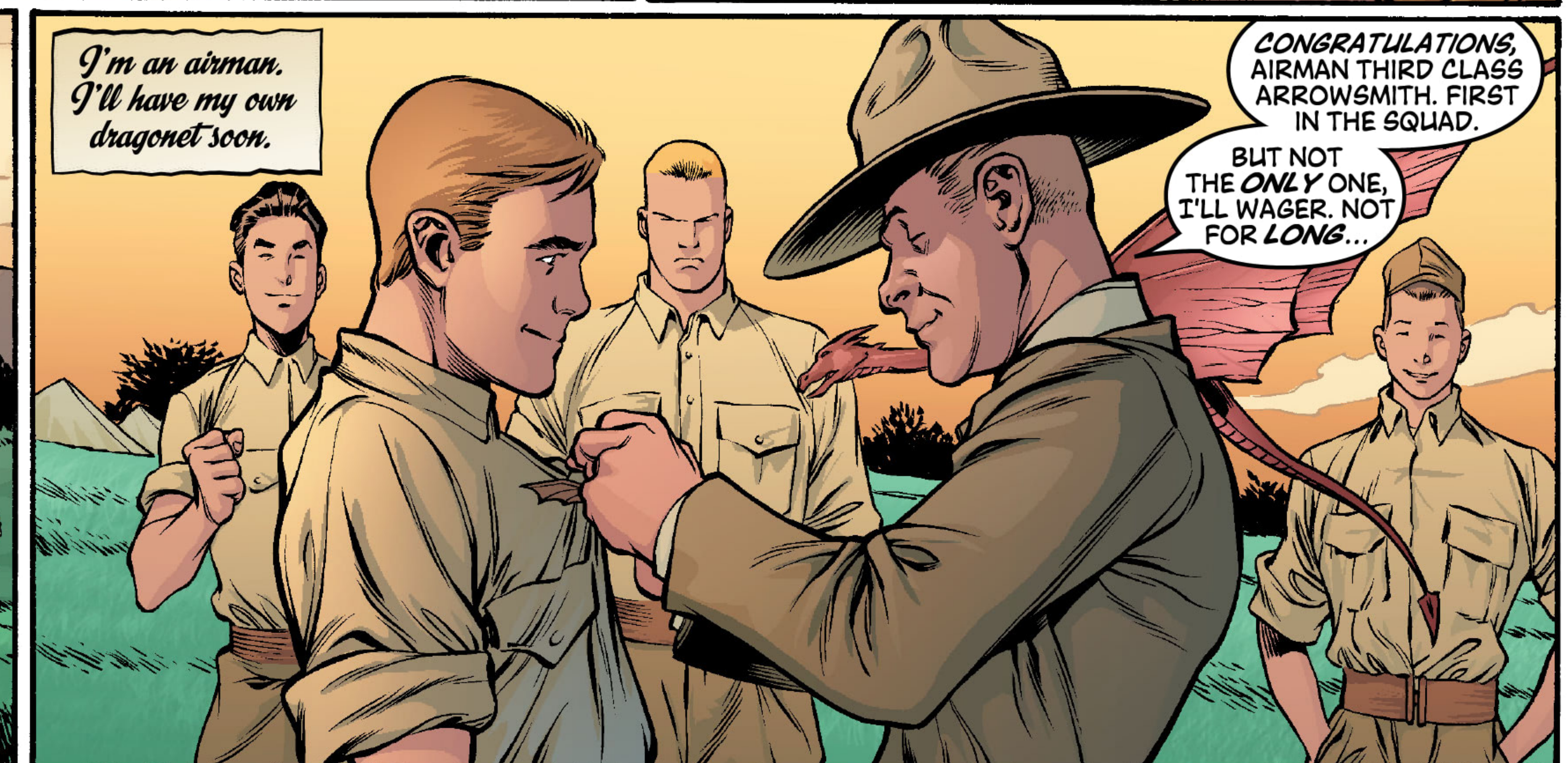
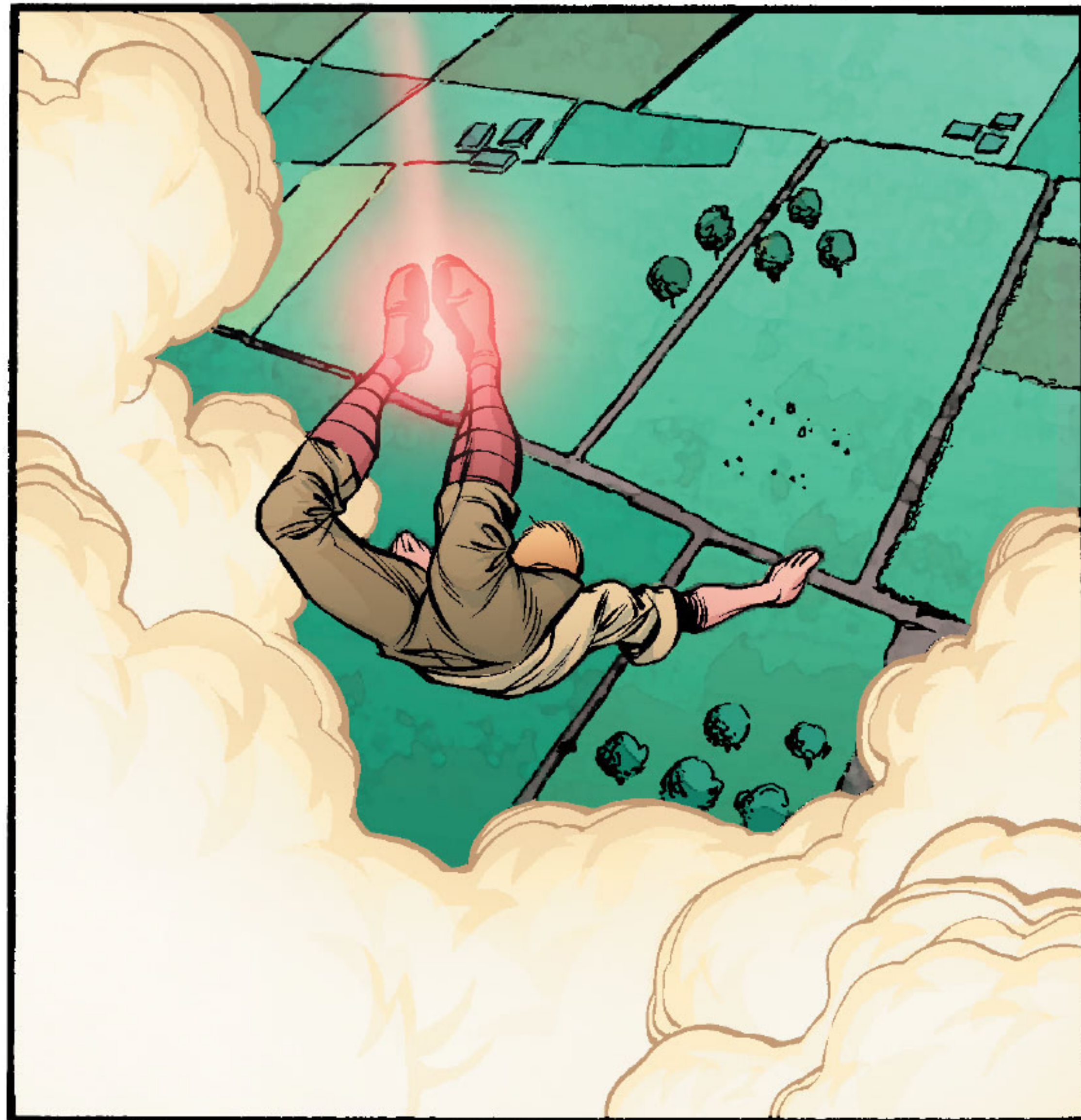
But still. Still...

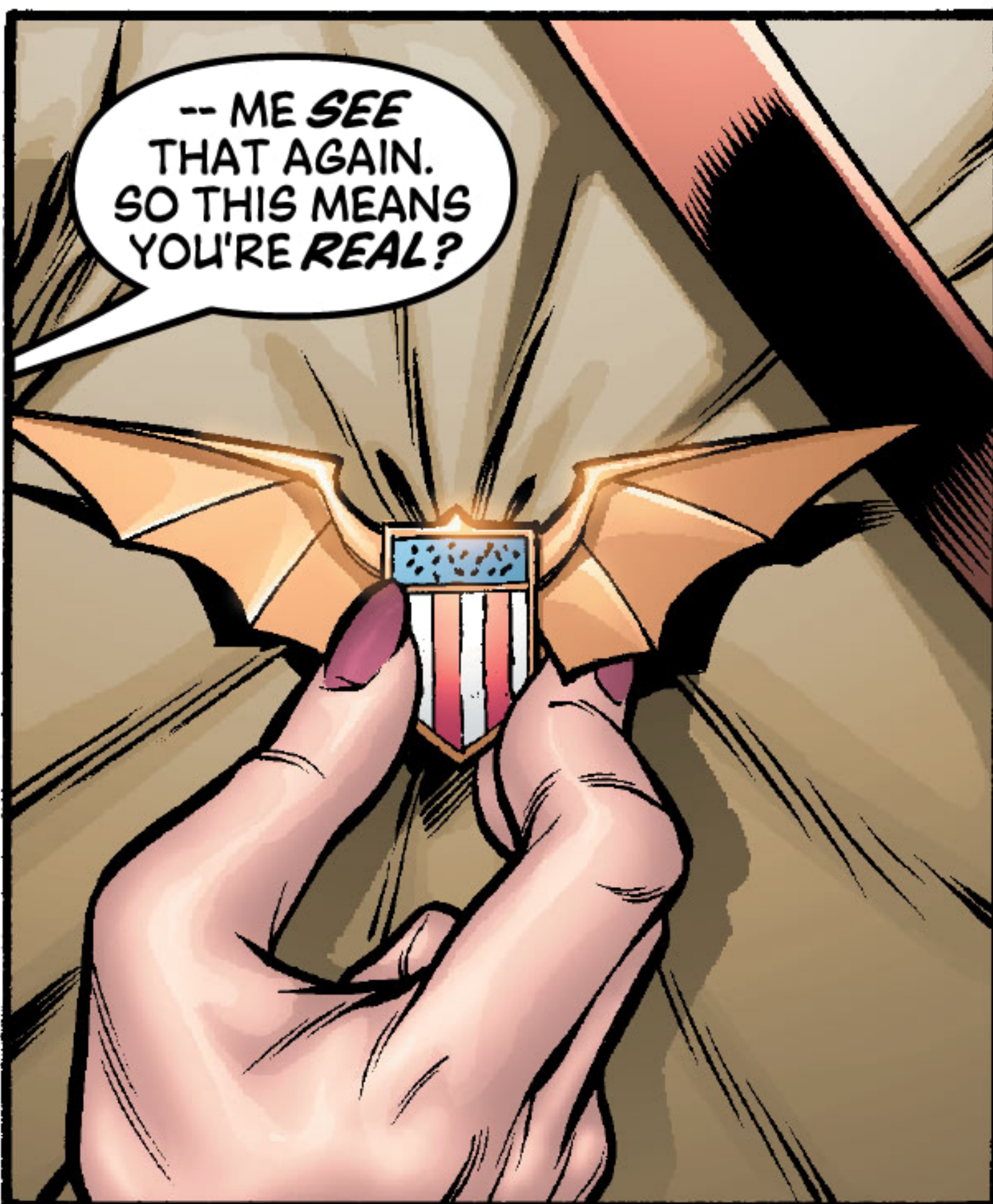
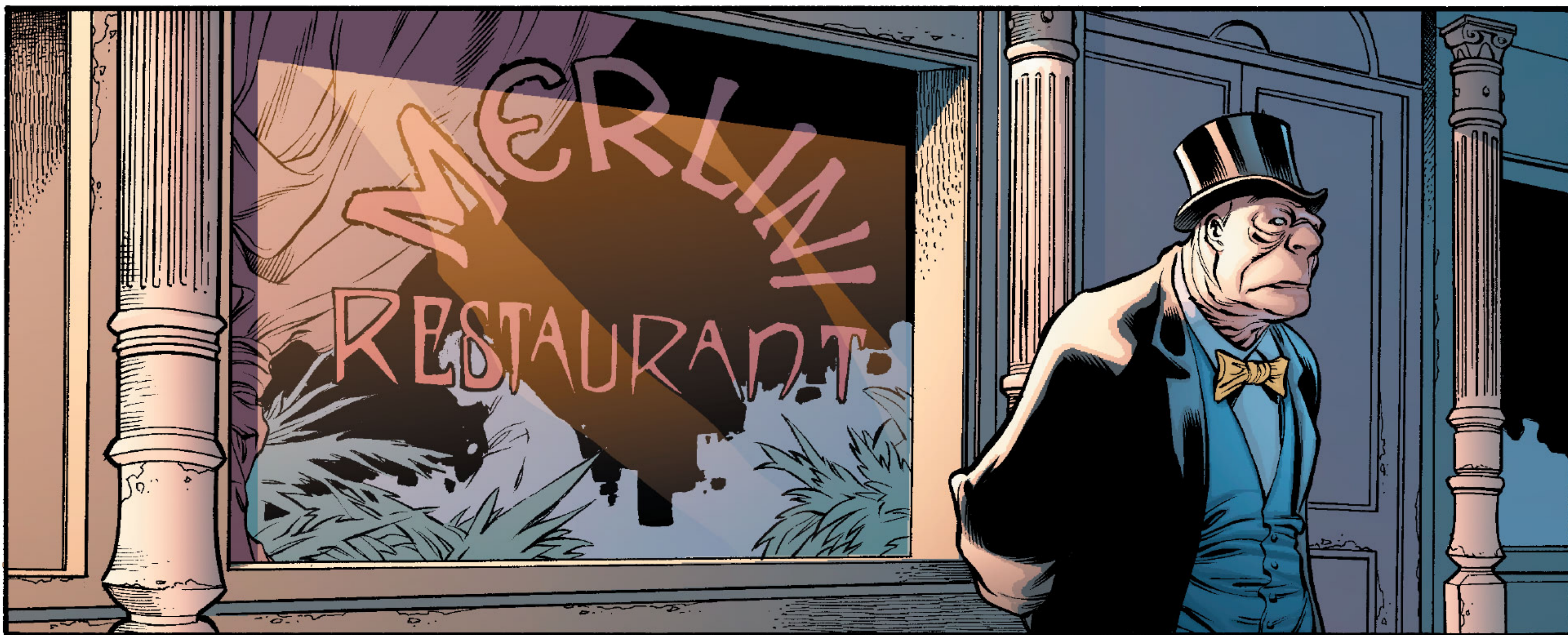


I'm an airman.
I'll have my own
dragonet soon.

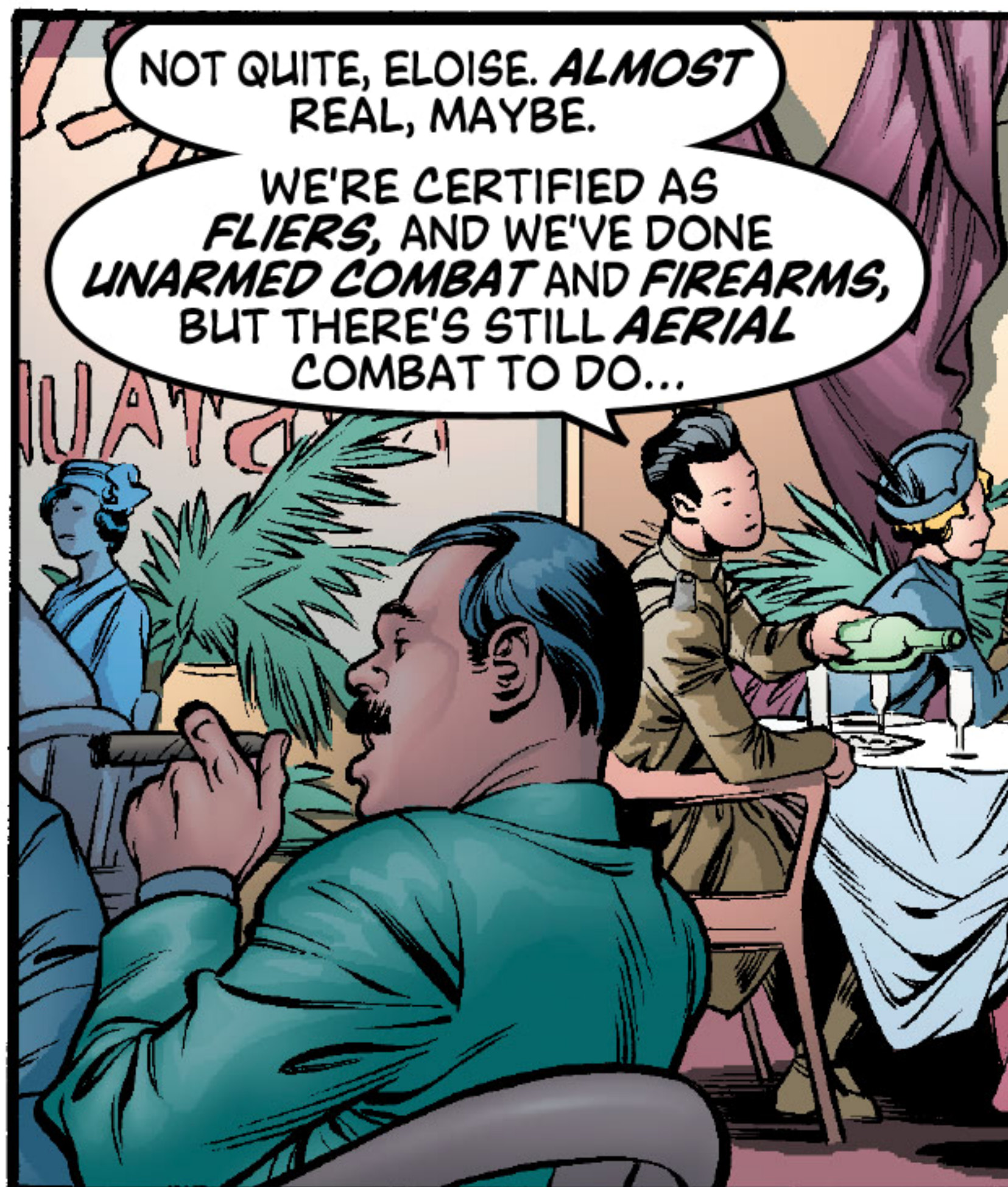
CONGRATULATIONS,
AIRMAN THIRD CLASS
ARROWSMITH. FIRST
IN THE SQUAD.

BUT NOT
THE ONLY ONE.
I'LL WAGER. NOT
FOR LONG...





-- ME *SEE* THAT AGAIN. SO THIS MEANS YOU'RE *REAL*?



NOT QUITE, ELOISE. *ALMOST* REAL, MAYBE.

WE'RE CERTIFIED AS *FLIERS*, AND WE'VE DONE *UNARMED COMBAT* AND *FIREARMS*, BUT THERE'S STILL *AERIAL COMBAT* TO DO...



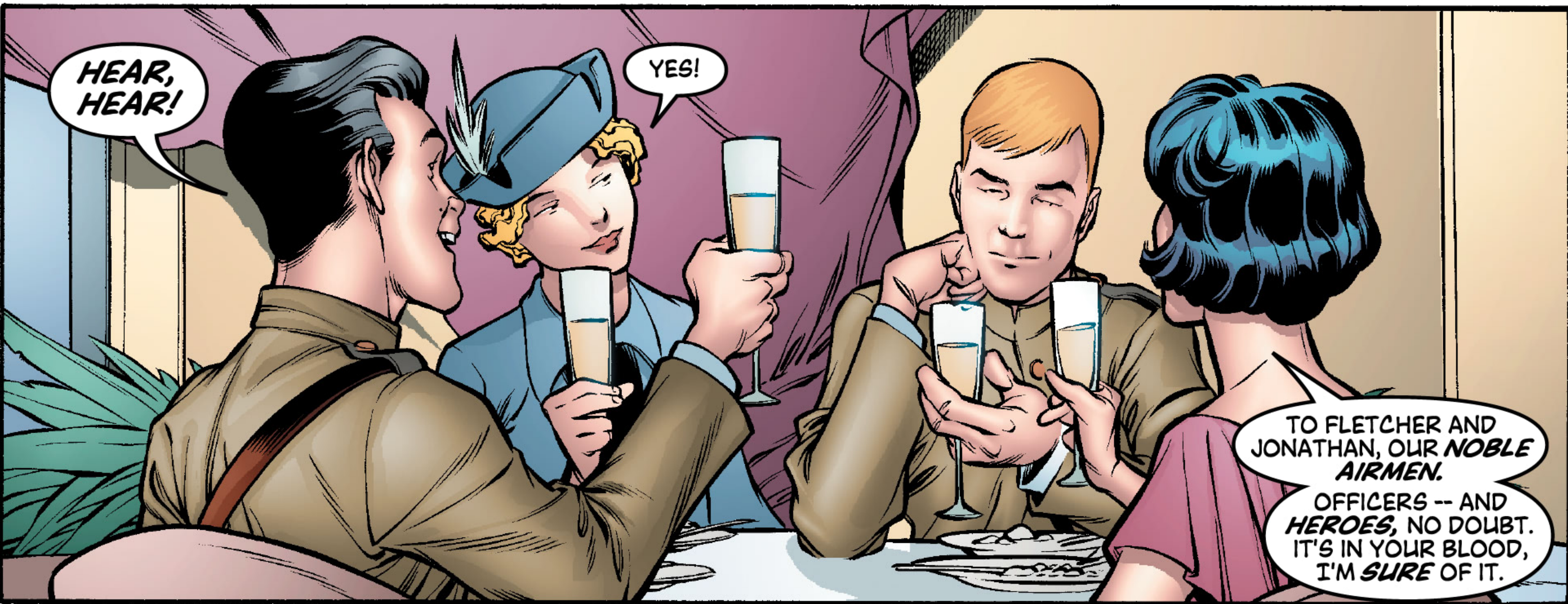
IT'S ALL GOING SO *FAST*.



I'M BARELY STEADY ON MY *FEET* UP THERE, AND THEY'RE GIVING US *SWORDS* NOW. I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN *KEEP UP*.

Oh, *HUSH*. YOU'LL BE WONDERFUL.

I THINK THIS CALLS FOR A *TOAST*.

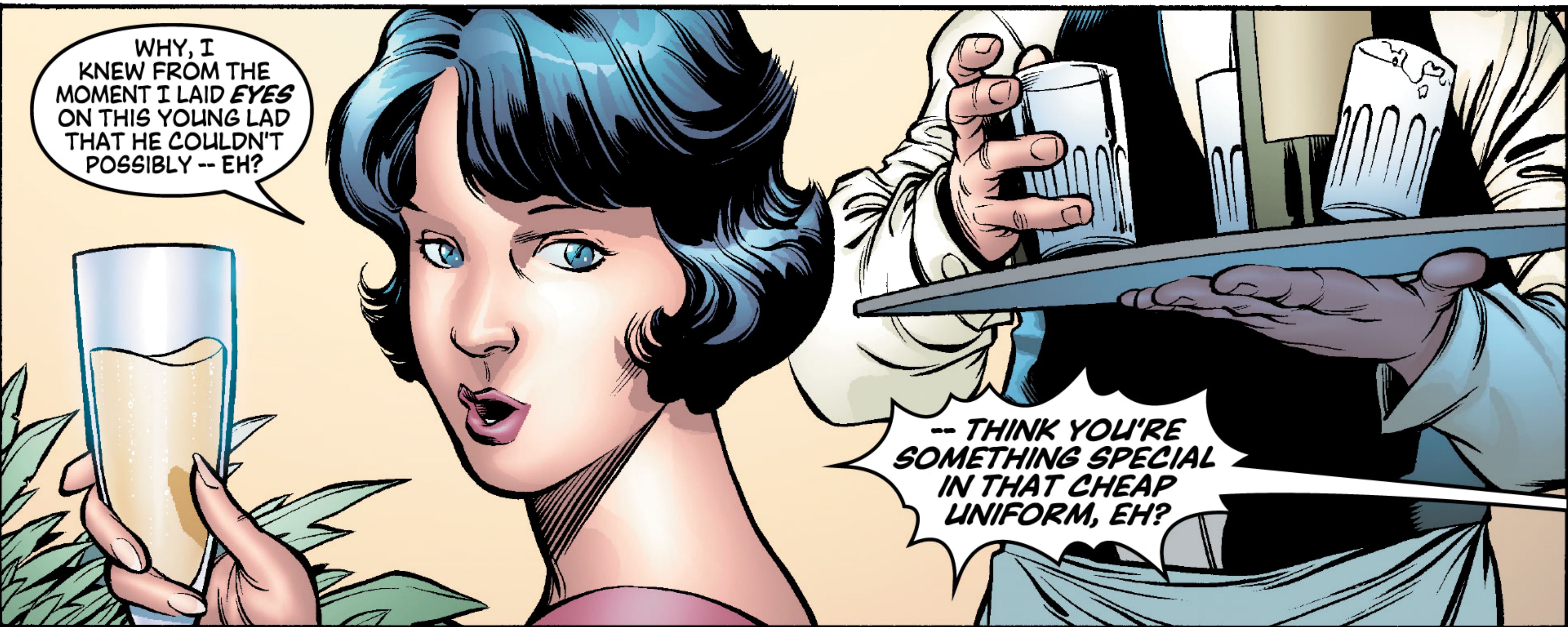


HEAR, HEAR!

YES!

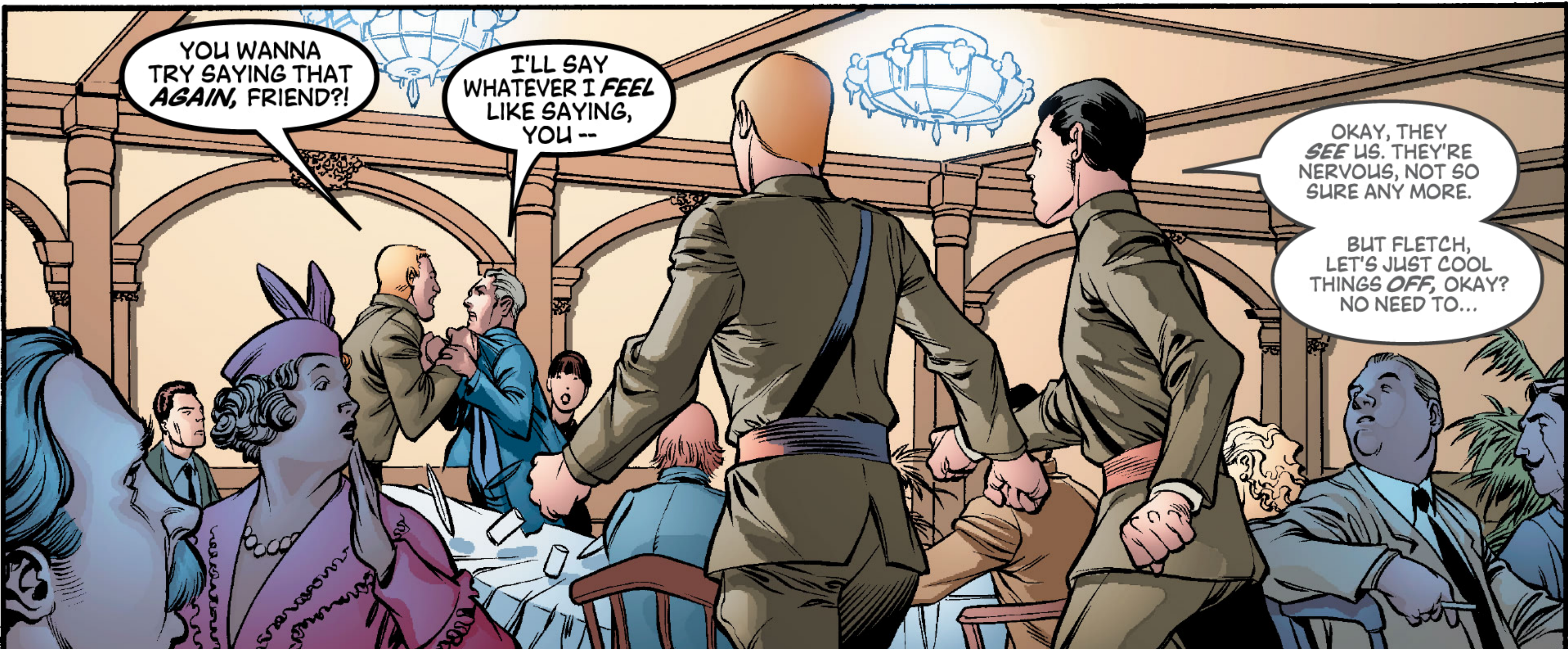
TO FLETCHER AND JONATHAN, OUR *NOBLE AIRMEN*.

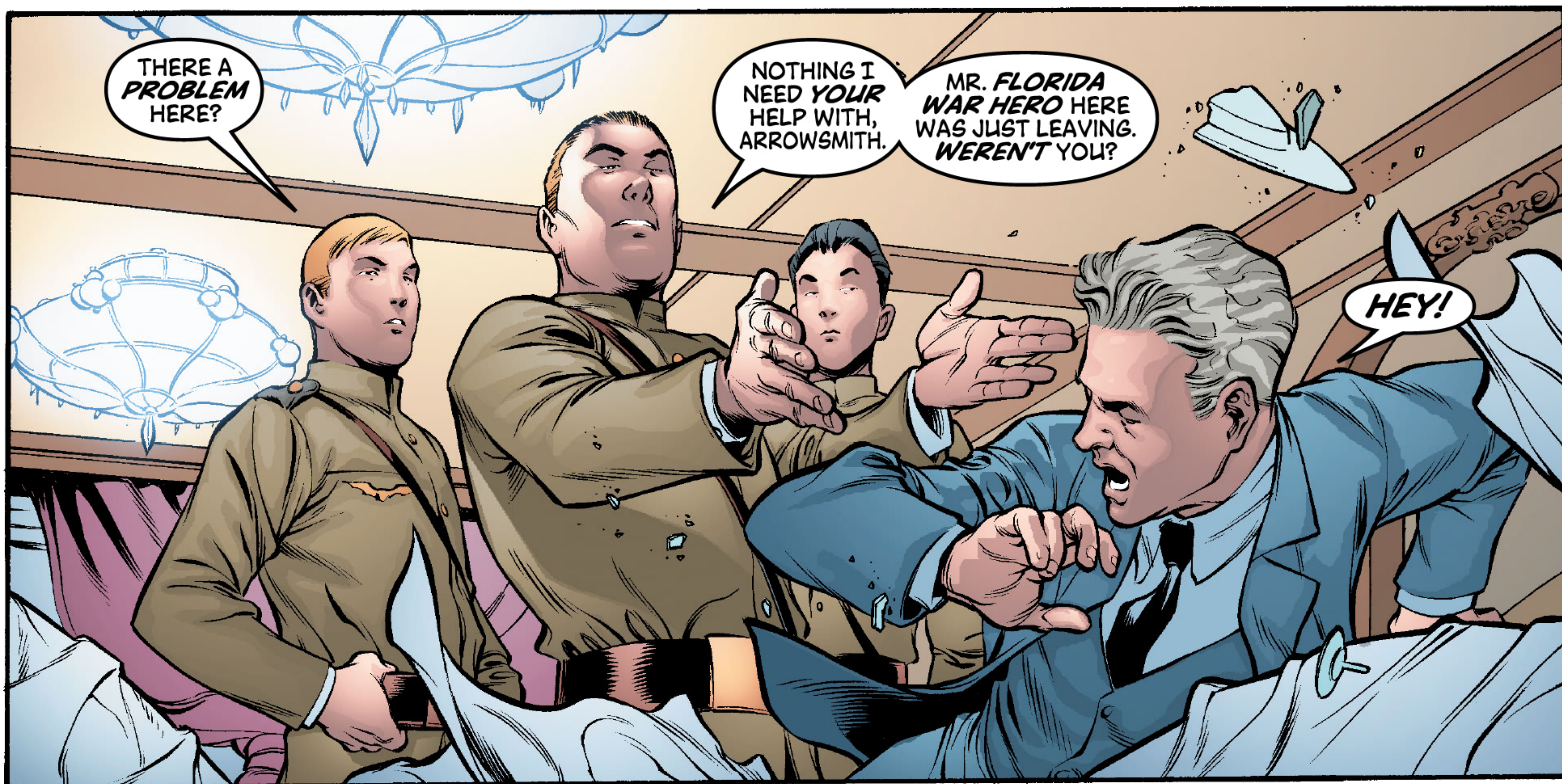
OFFICERS -- AND *HEROES*, NO DOUBT. IT'S IN YOUR BLOOD, I'M *SURE* OF IT.



WHY, I KNEW FROM THE MOMENT I LAID *EYES* ON THIS YOUNG LAD THAT HE COULDN'T POSSIBLY -- EH?

-- THINK YOU'RE SOMETHING SPECIAL IN THAT *CHEAP* UNIFORM, EH?





THERE A
PROBLEM
HERE?

NOTHING I
NEED YOUR
HELP WITH,
ARROWSMITH.

MR. FLORIDA
WAR HERO HERE
WAS JUST LEAVING.
WEREN'T YOU?

HEY!

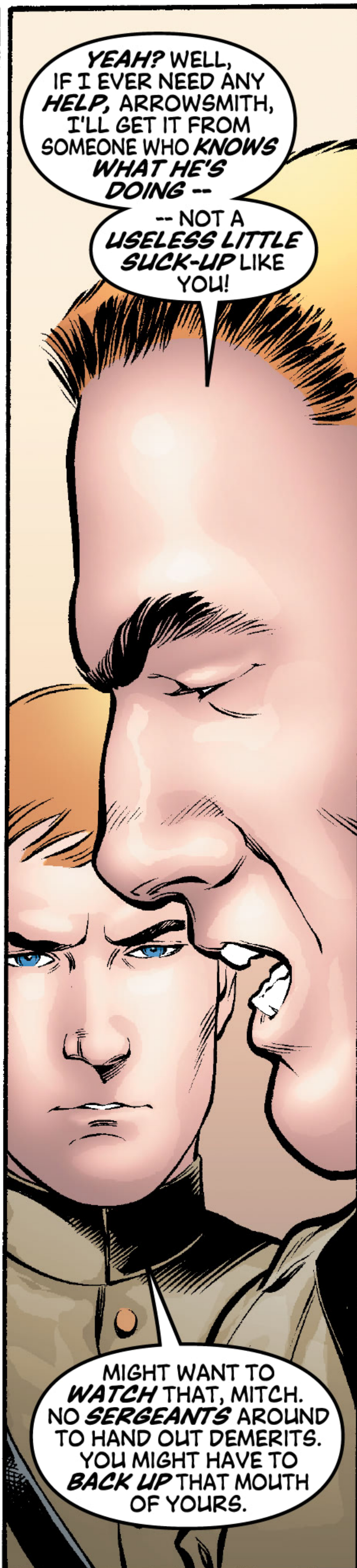


MARION,
JACK, HOWARD...
WE'RE GOING!

I'LL OVERLOOK
YOUR BOORISHNESS
THIS TIME, PLAY-SOLDIER --
BUT IF YOUR FRIENDS
WEREN'T HERE --

HAH!

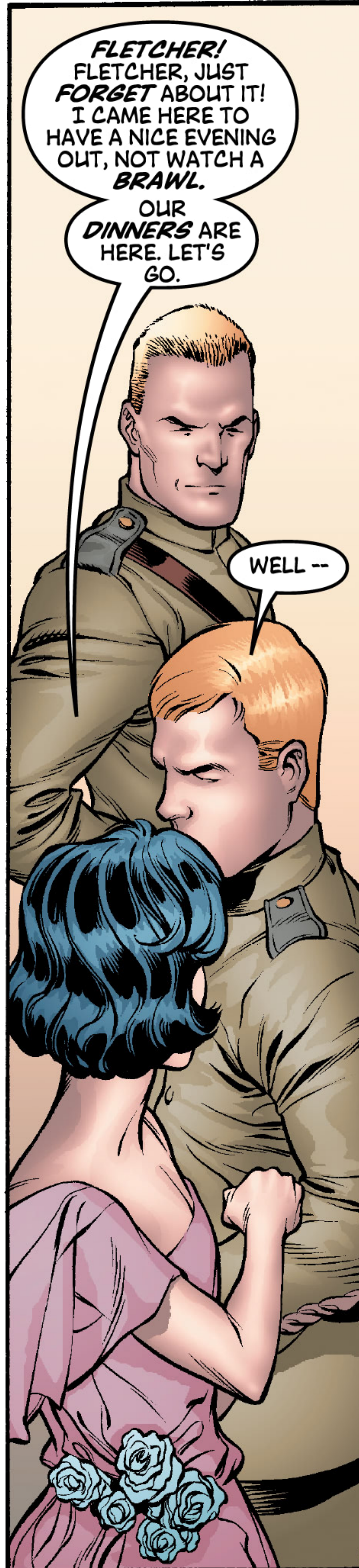
THREE OF
THEM, MITCH.
LOOKED LIKE YOU
COULD USE A
HAND.



YEAH? WELL,
IF I EVER NEED ANY
HELP, ARROWSMITH,
I'LL GET IT FROM
SOMEONE WHO KNOWS
WHAT HE'S
DOING --

-- NOT A
USELESS LITTLE
SUCK-UP LIKE
YOU!

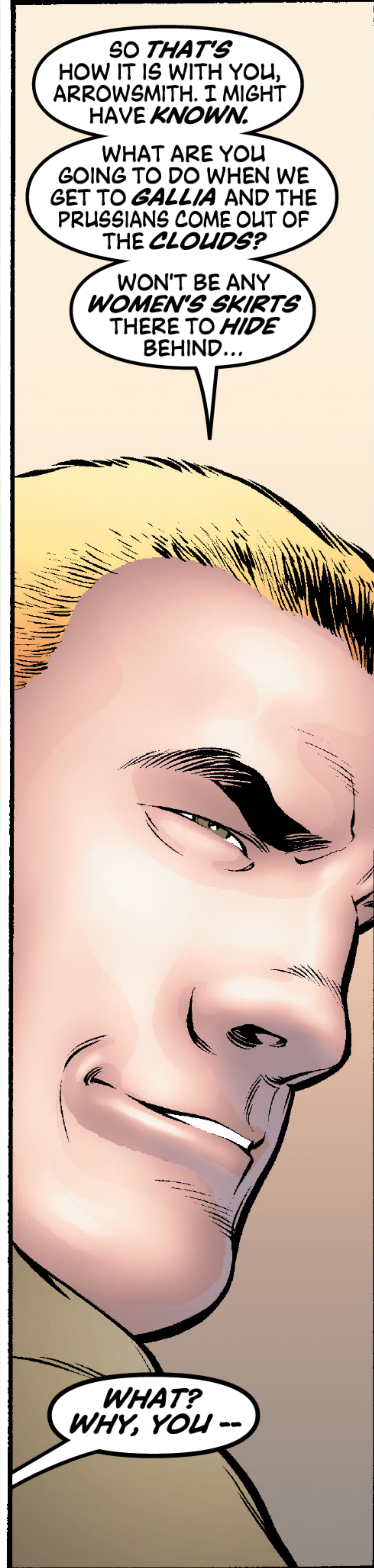
MIGHT WANT TO
WATCH THAT, MITCH.
NO SERGEANTS AROUND
TO HAND OUT DEMERITS.
YOU MIGHT HAVE TO
BACK UP THAT MOUTH
OF YOURS.



FLETCHER!
FLETCHER, JUST
FORGET ABOUT IT!
I CAME HERE TO
HAVE A NICE EVENING
OUT, NOT WATCH A
BRAWL.

OUR
DINNERS ARE
HERE. LET'S
GO.

WELL --



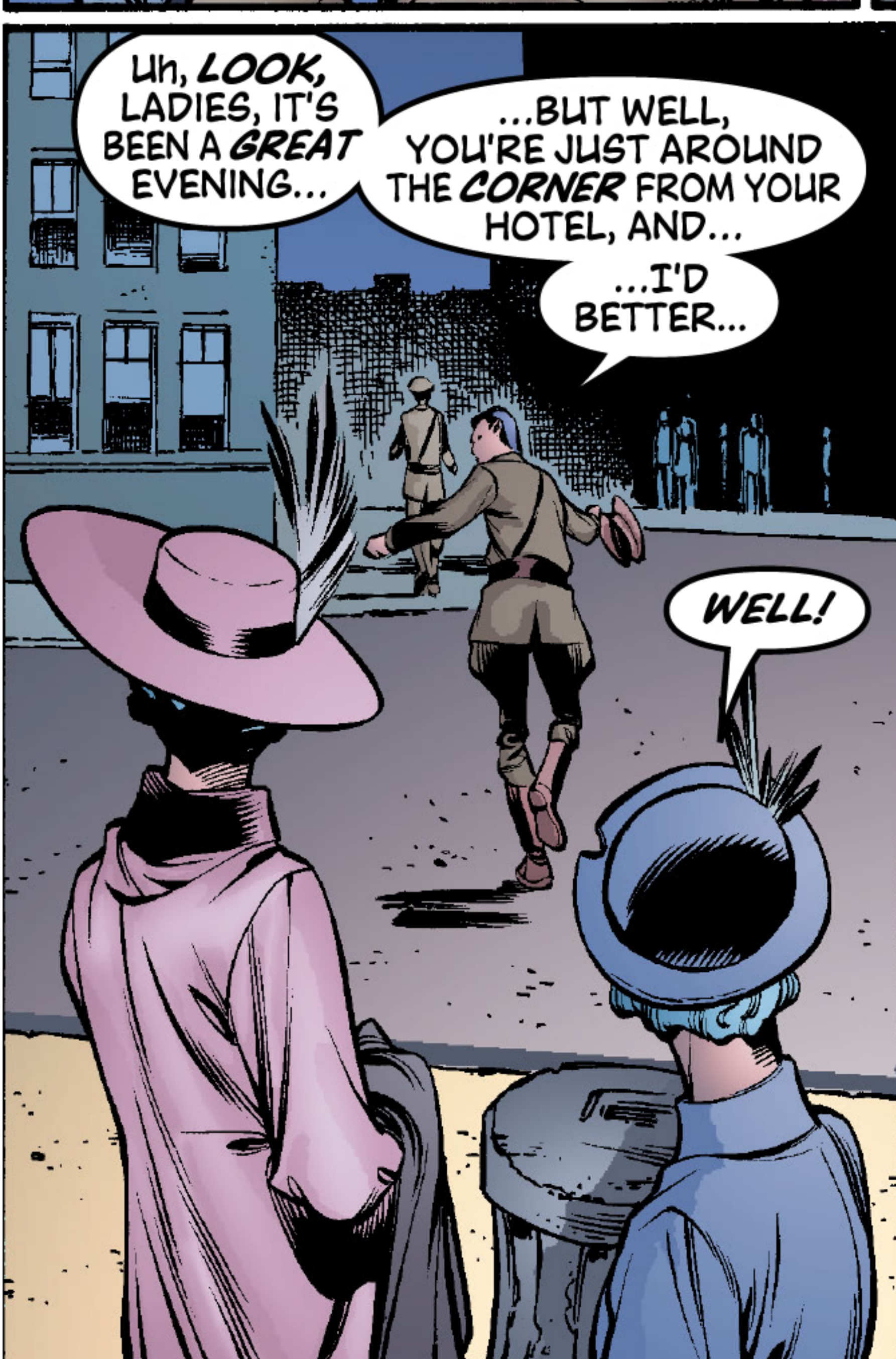
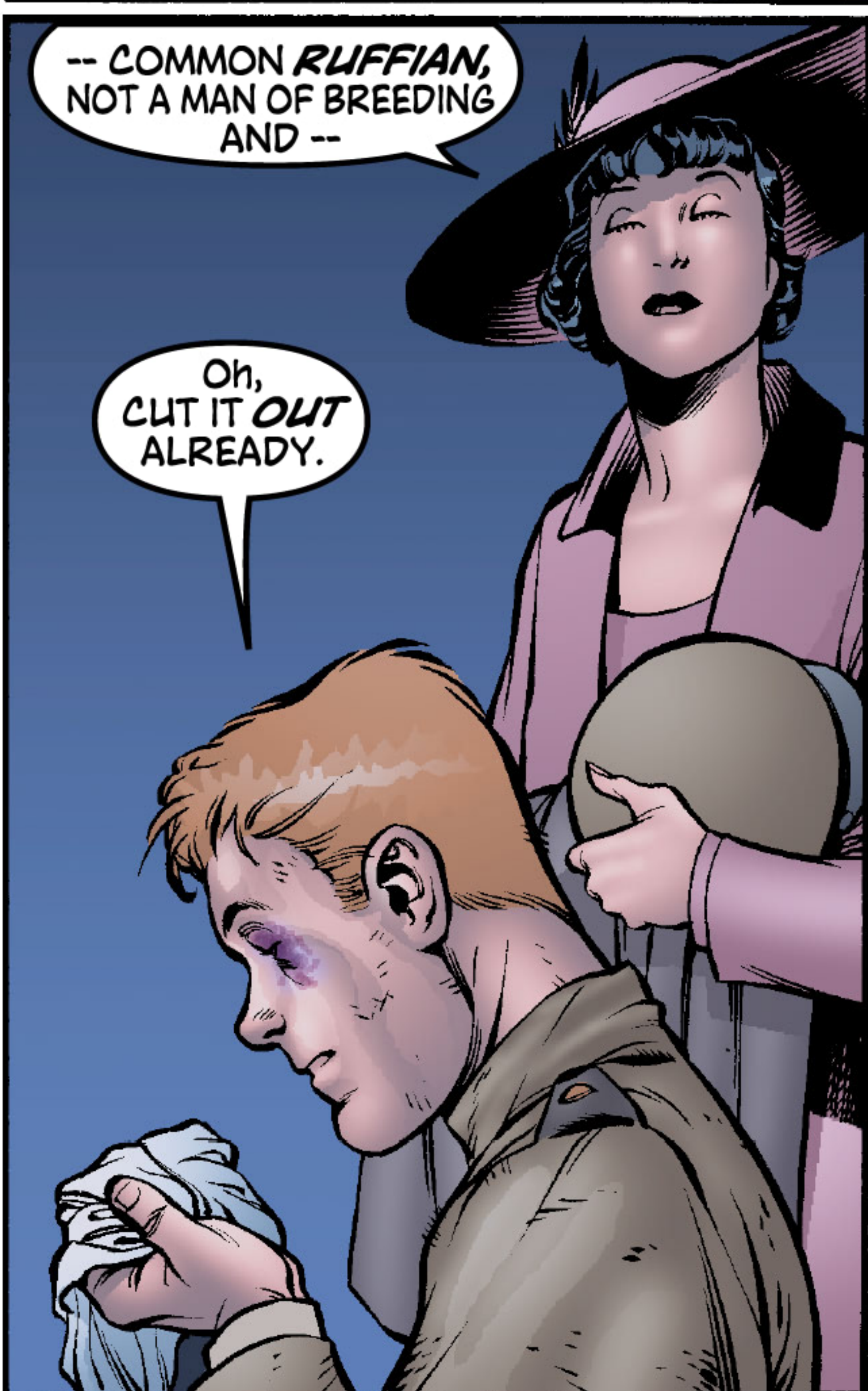
SO THAT'S
HOW IT IS WITH YOU,
ARROWSMITH. I MIGHT
HAVE KNOWN.

WHAT ARE YOU
GOING TO DO WHEN WE
GET TO GALLIA AND THE
PRUSSAINS COME OUT OF
THE CLOUDS?

WON'T BE ANY
WOMEN'S SKIRTS
THERE TO HIDE
BEHIND...

WHAT?
WHY, YOU --







I TOL' YOU WE SHOULD DA SKIPPED... THA' **LAST** PLACE... ALMOS' MISSED LAS' **FERRY**...
ALMOS'...

SHYEAH, YEAH...AN' WHO DRAG' ME INTO THREE PLACES **BEFR** THAT ONE, UNH?

Y'THINK... THINK THIS'LL **WORK**...?



YEAH, YEAH! WE GO IN **MAIN** ENTRANCE, WE GET CAUGHT F'R BEING PAST' **CURFEW**, BUT THIS WAY...
SHH! SHHH!

KLATA KLANGG

SOME...SOME **NIGHT**, HUH? YOU...

...YOU SURE LOST YOUR **GIRL**, Huh?



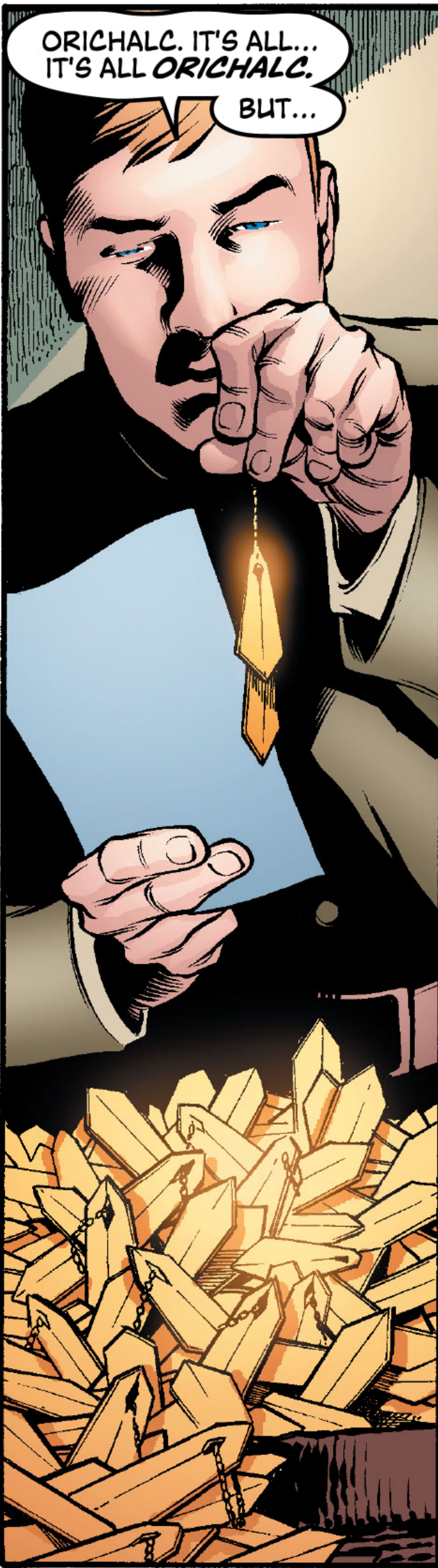
LOST **YOURS** TOO...LOOK OF IT. BUT QU-QUIET. SOMEONE'LL **HEAR** YOU...

NAH...WE GET BACK TO **BUNKS**...NOBODY BE...WISER...

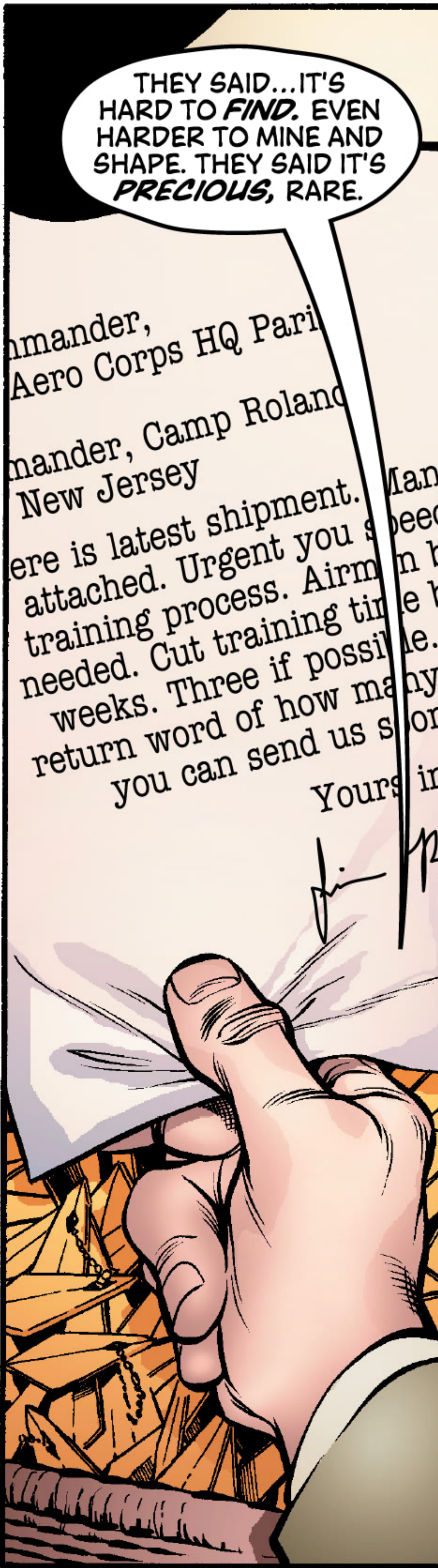
OKAY, OKAY...JUST BE...**HM**?



YOU...GO ON **AHEAD**, OKAY? I'LL BE...UP IN A MINUTE...

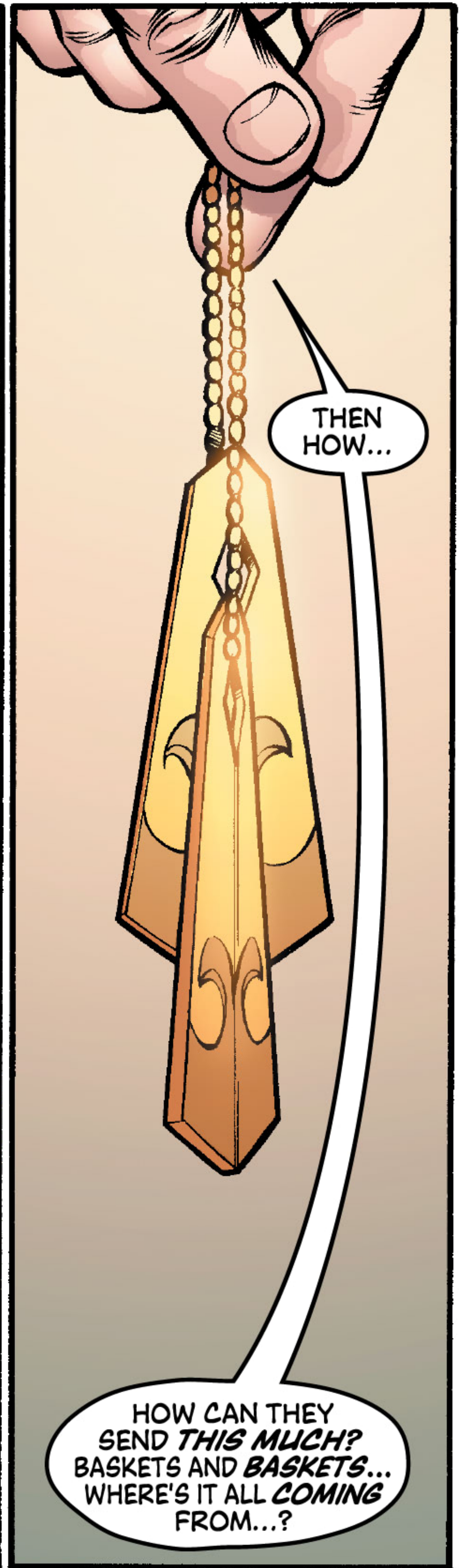


ORICHALC. IT'S ALL...
IT'S ALL **ORICHALC**.
BUT...



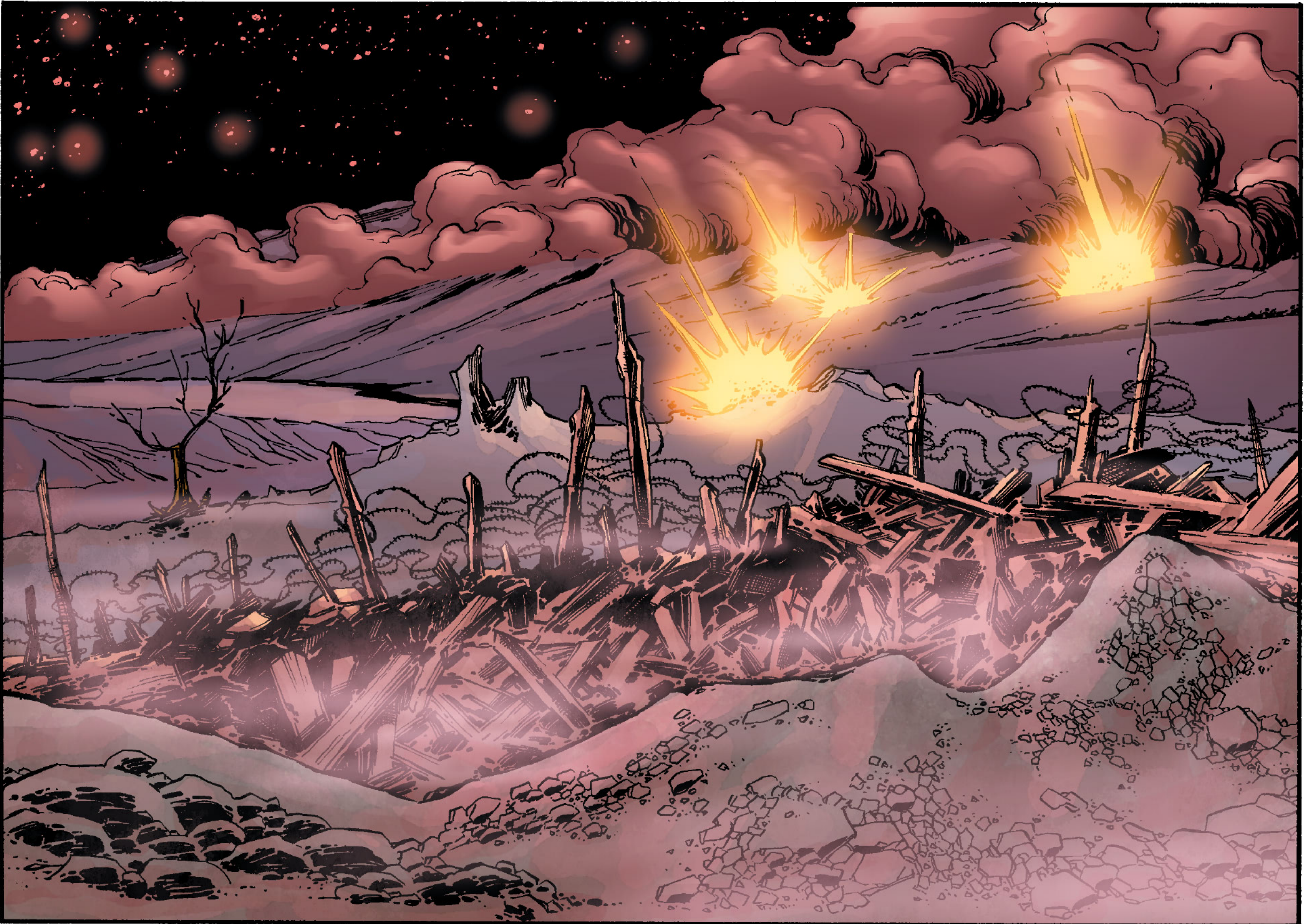
THEY SAID...IT'S
HARD TO *FIND*. EVEN
HARDER TO MINE AND
SHAPE. THEY SAID IT'S
PRECIOUS, RARE.

Commander,
Aero Corps HQ Paris
Commander, Camp Roland
New Jersey
Here is latest shipment. Many
attached. Urgent you speed
training process. Airmen be
needed. Cut training time
weeks. Three if possible.
return word of how many
you can send us soon
Yours in
[Signature]



THEN
HOW...

HOW CAN THEY
SEND **THIS MUCH**?
BASKETS AND BASKETS...
WHERE'S IT ALL **COMING**
FROM...?



CHAPTER THREE



Down to
the Sea in
Ships

*The North Atlantic.
July 1915.*

Dear Mrs. Kerry,

I know my mother shares my letters with you and your family, but since Jonathan doesn't write as much as he should, I thought I'd send this one to you.

I'll be posting this just before we leave, headed off to Gallia on the R.M.S. Crowninshield. It's one of the new ley-ships, and is it ever fast — it'll get us there in only six days!

We are both fully-qualified airmen now — flight-lieutenants junior-grade — though I have to say I don't feel like it yet.

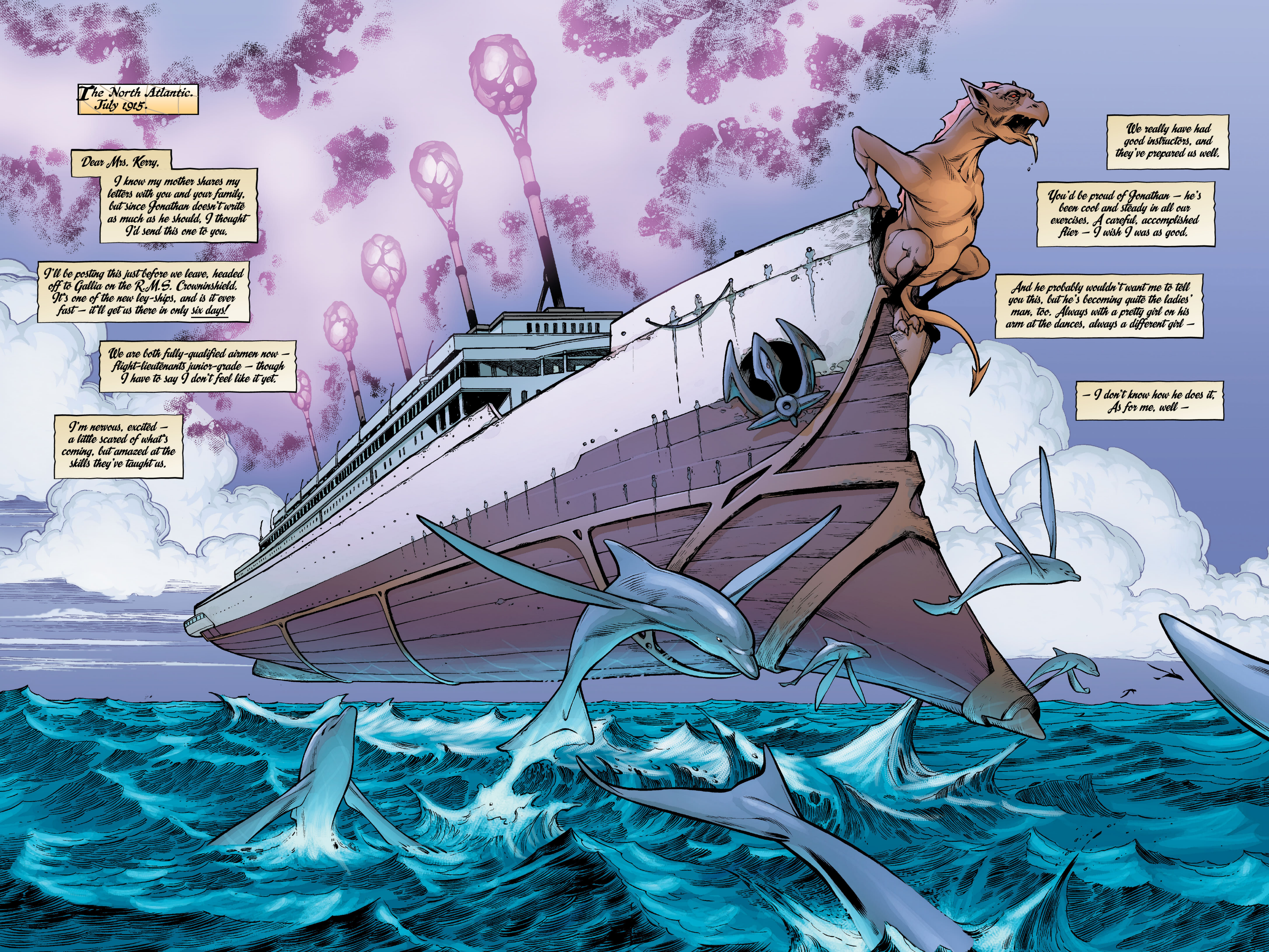
I'm nervous, excited — a little scared of what's coming, but amazed at the skills they've taught us.

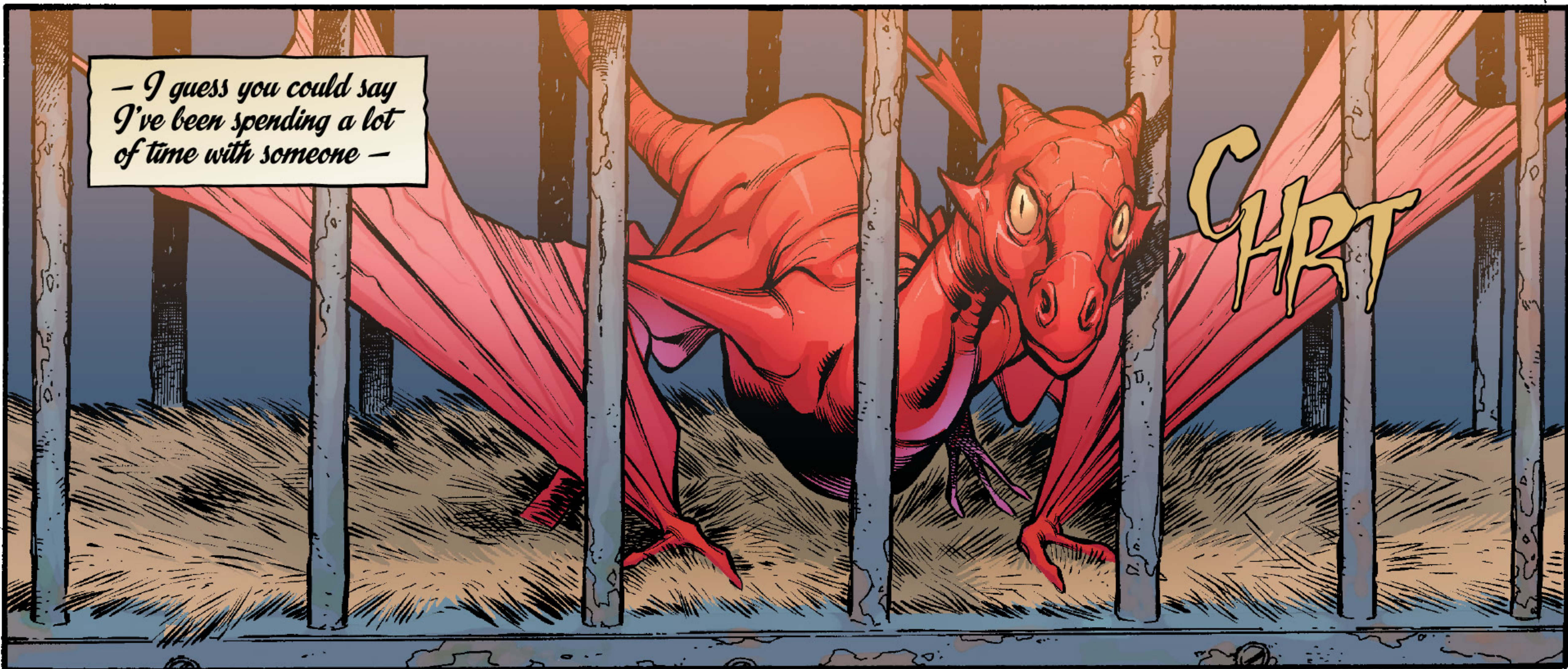
We really have had good instructors, and they've prepared us well.

You'd be proud of Jonathan — he's been cool and steady in all our exercises. A careful, accomplished flier — I wish I was as good.

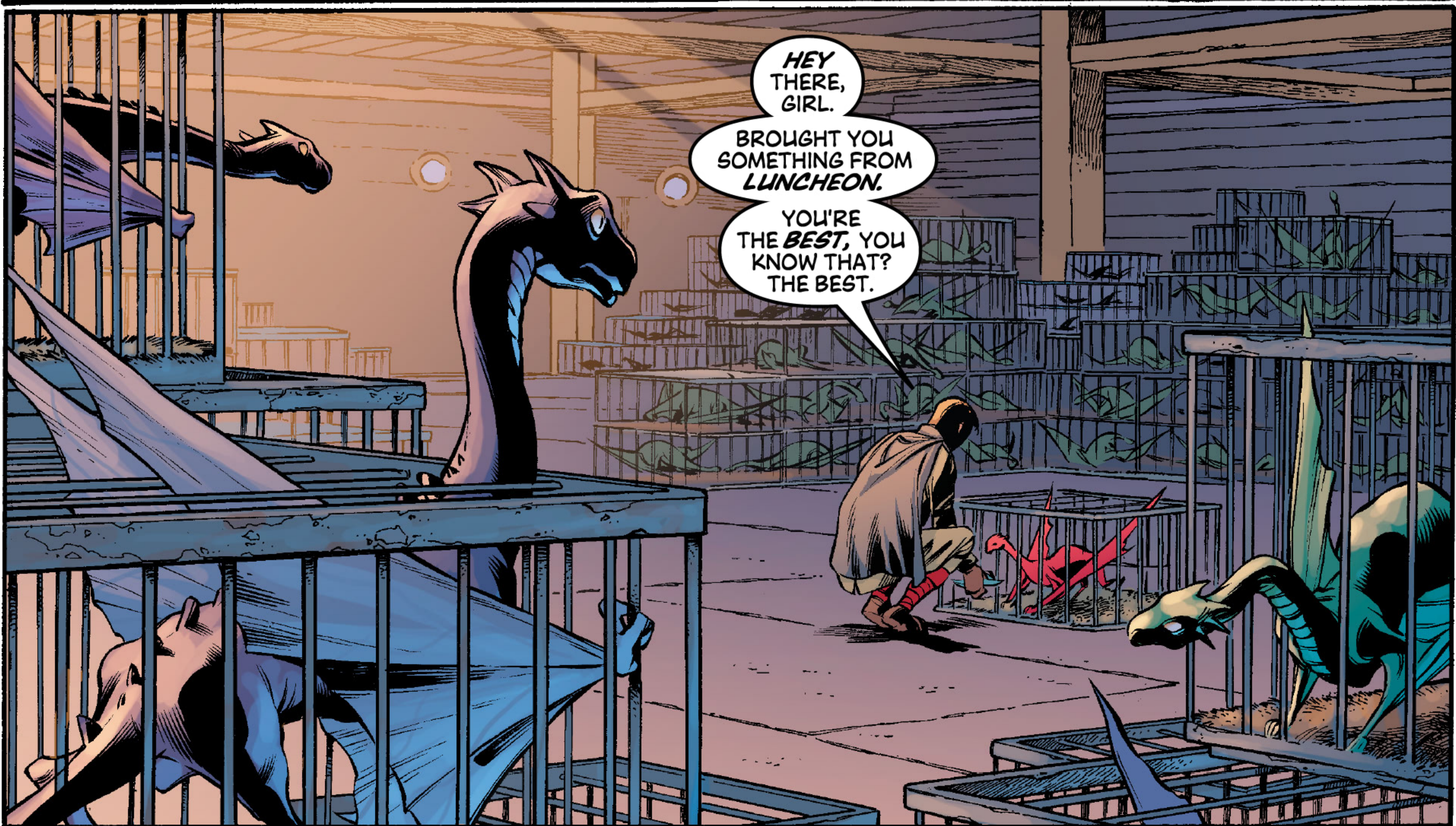
And he probably wouldn't want me to tell you this, but he's becoming quite the ladies' man, too. Always with a pretty girl on his arm at the dances, always a different girl —

— I don't know how he does it. As for me, well —





— I guess you could say
I've been spending a lot
of time with someone —



HEY
THERE,
GIRL.

BROUGHT YOU
SOMETHING FROM
LUNCHEON.

YOU'RE
THE **BEST**, YOU
KNOW THAT?
THE BEST.

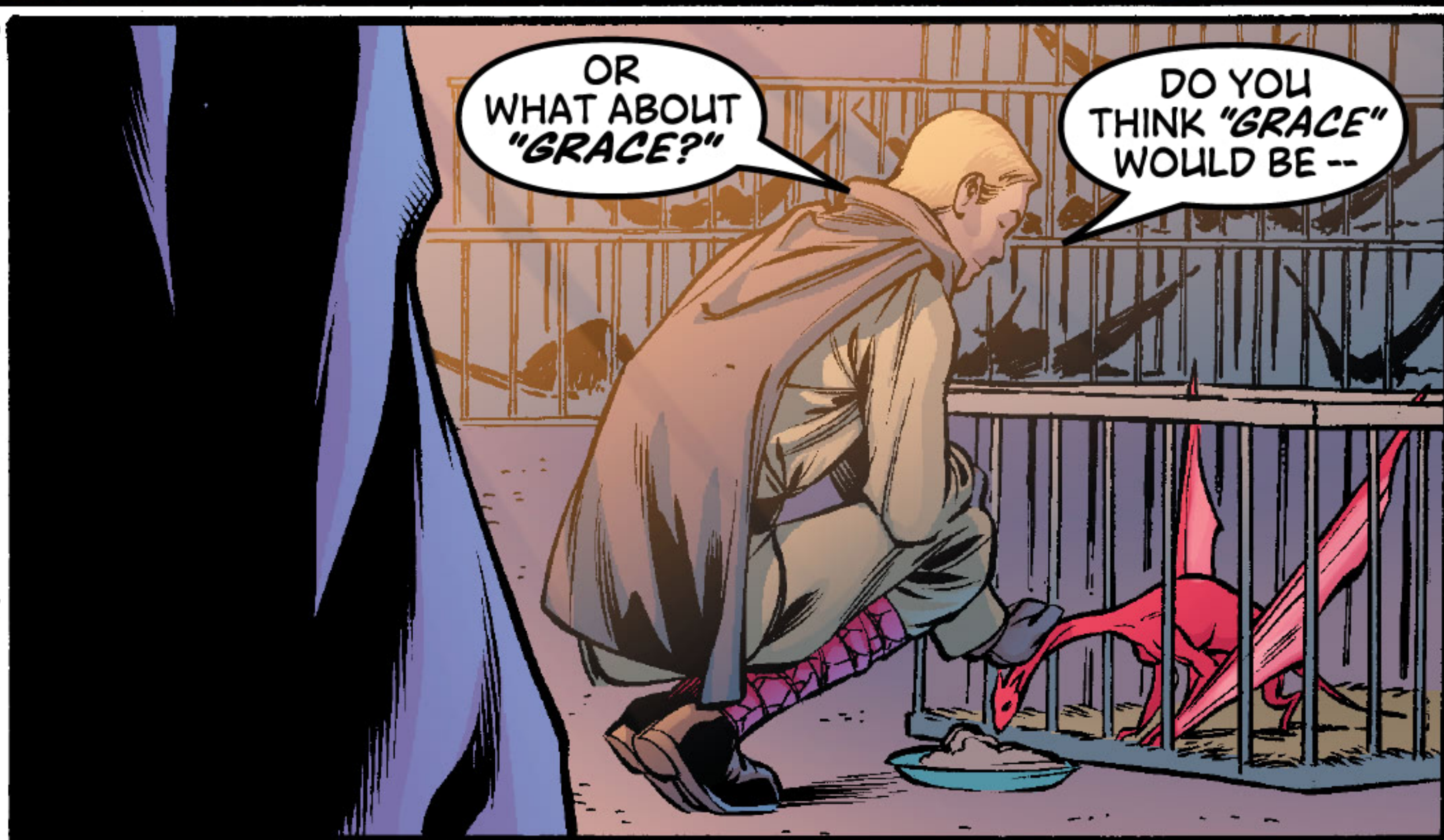


WE STILL
HAVE TO FIND A
NAME FOR YOU,
DON'T WE?

HOW
ABOUT "**EMILY**?"
OR "**HILDA**" —
DO YOU LIKE
"**HILDA**?"

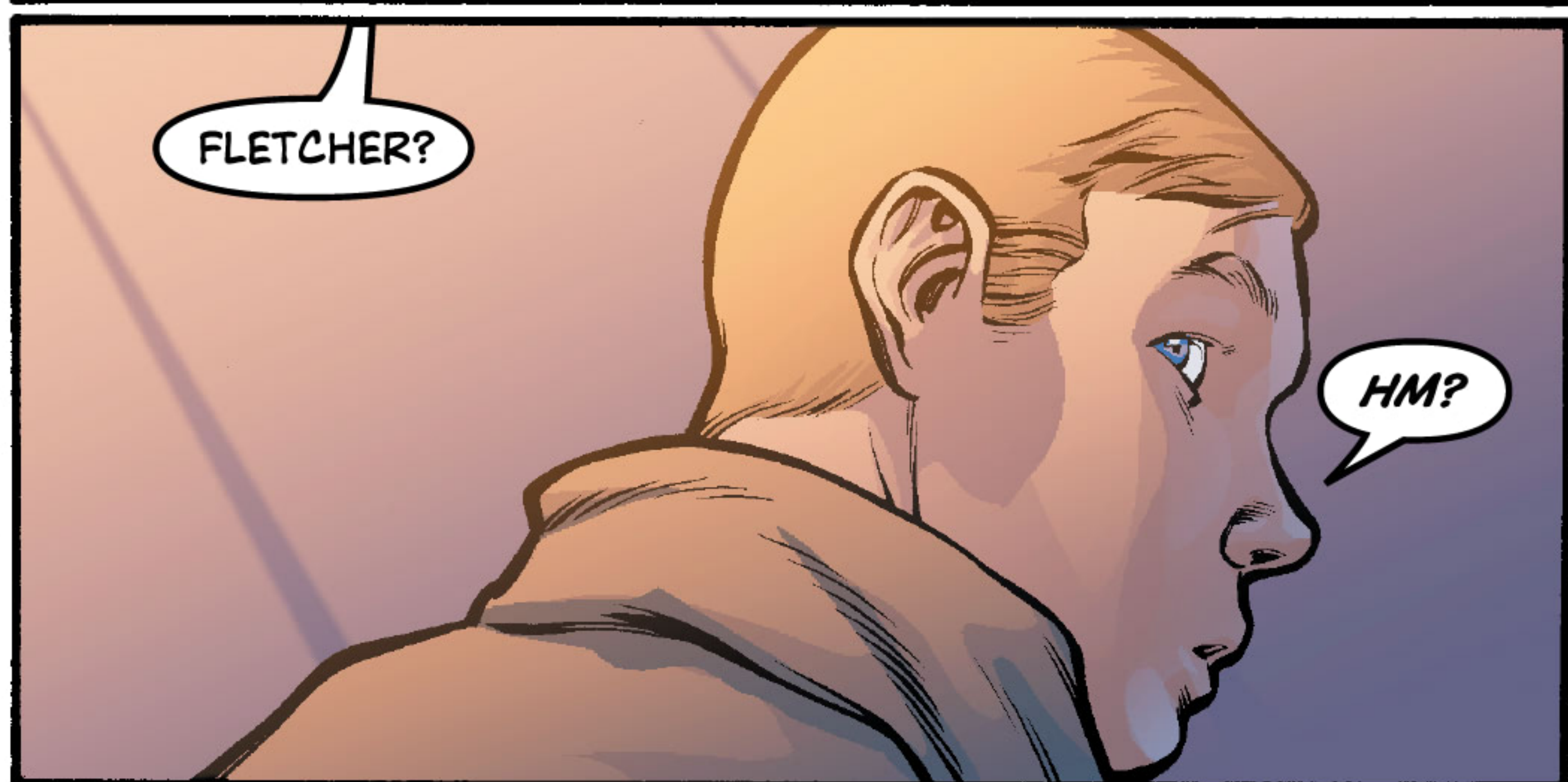
WE HAD A
DOG NAMED
HILDA WHEN I
WAS JUST
A KID...

CHRRR



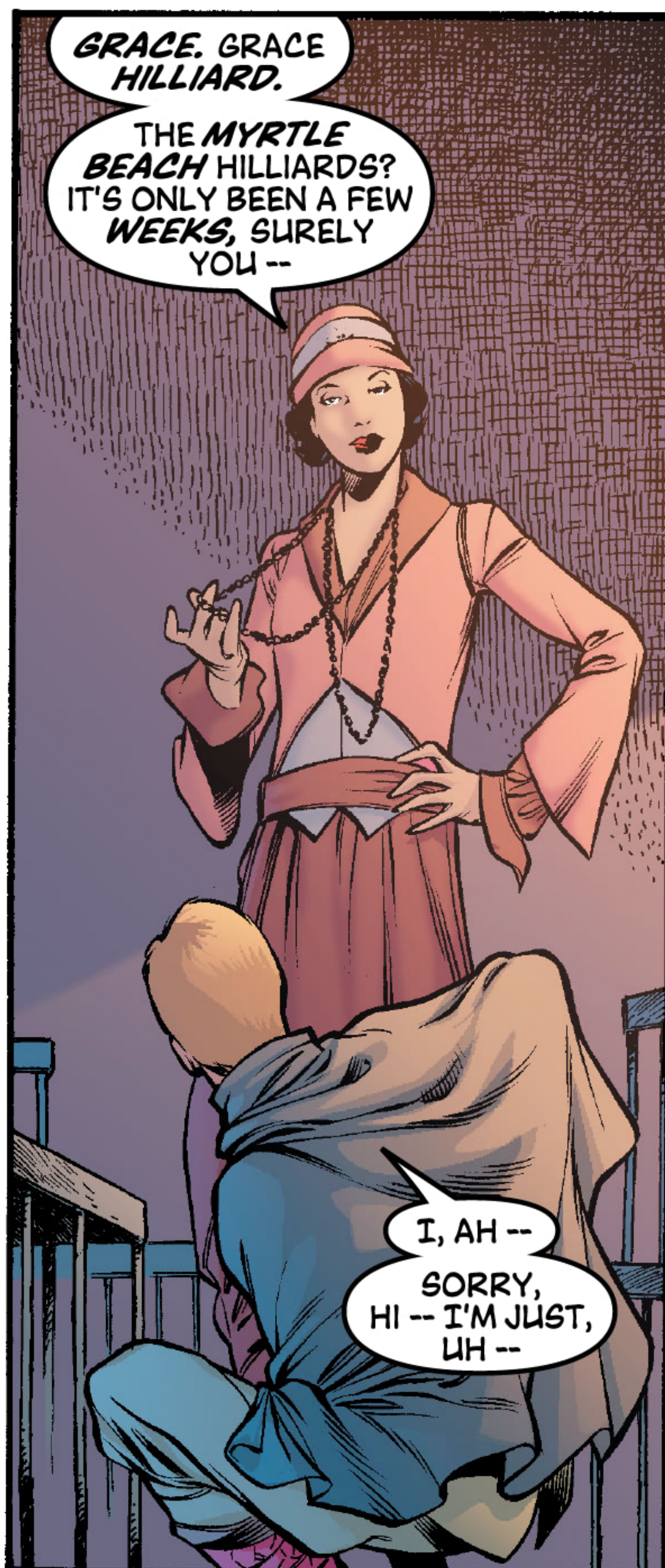
OR
WHAT ABOUT
"**GRACE**?"

DO YOU
THINK "**GRACE**"
WOULD BE --



FLETCHER?

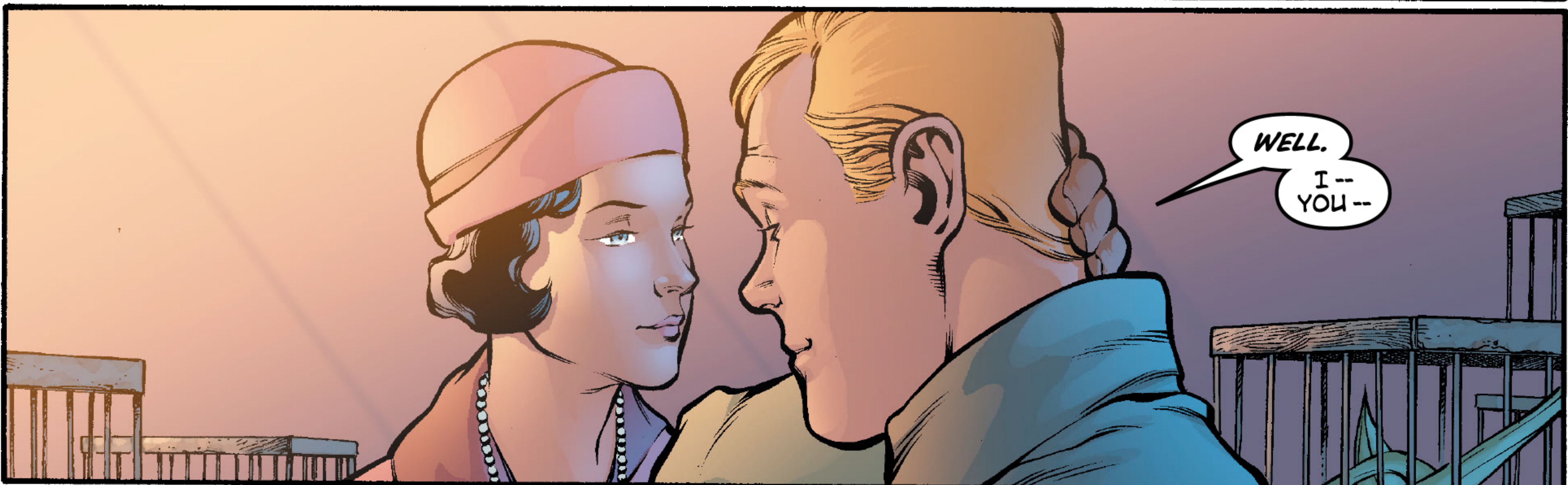
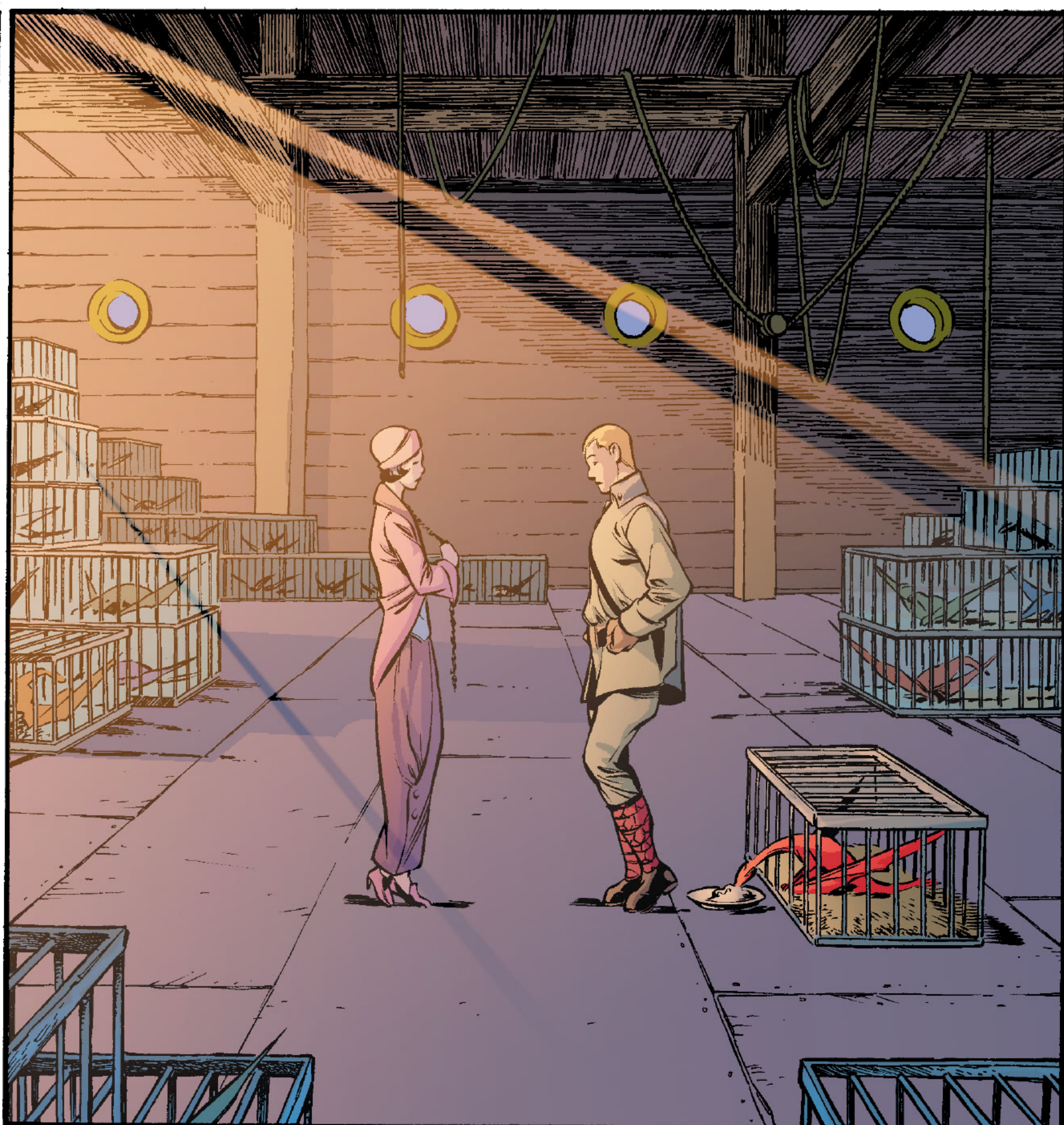
HM?



GRACE. GRACE
HILLIARD.

THE MYRTLE
BEACH HILLIARDS?
IT'S ONLY BEEN A FEW
WEEKS, SURELY
YOU --

I, AH --
SORRY,
HI -- I'M JUST,
UH --



WELL.

I --
YOU --

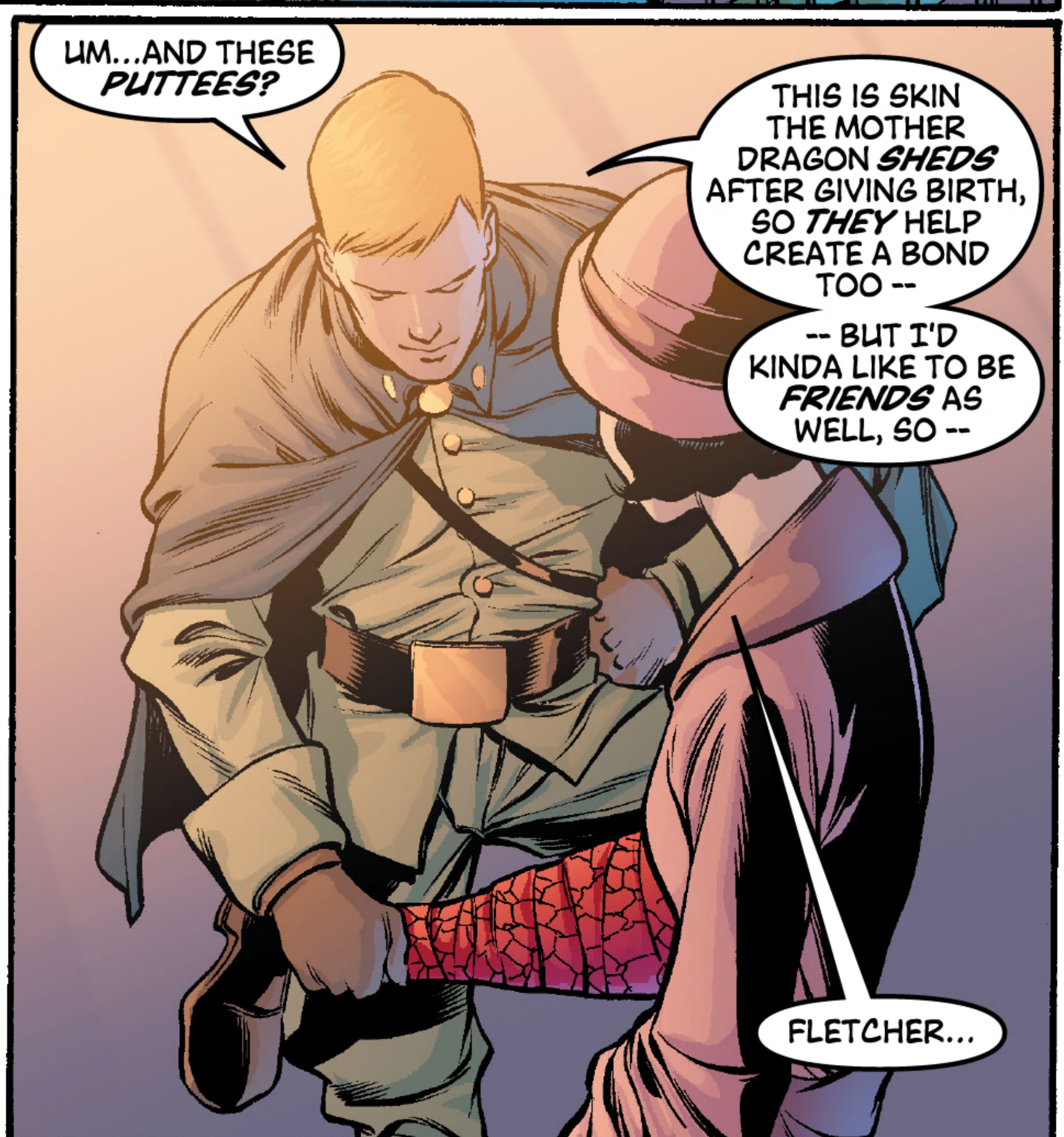


MY **DRAGONET!**
GRACE, MEET...UH,
HILDA! HILDA,
GRACE.

CHARMED,
HILDA.

THEY ADVISE
US TO SPEND **TIME**
WITH OUR **DRAGONETS,**
BOND TO THEM.

THE SPELLS
WE CAST BORROW
THE **DRAGONETS'**
ABILITY TO **FLY,** SO
WE'RE A **TEAM,**
SORT OF...

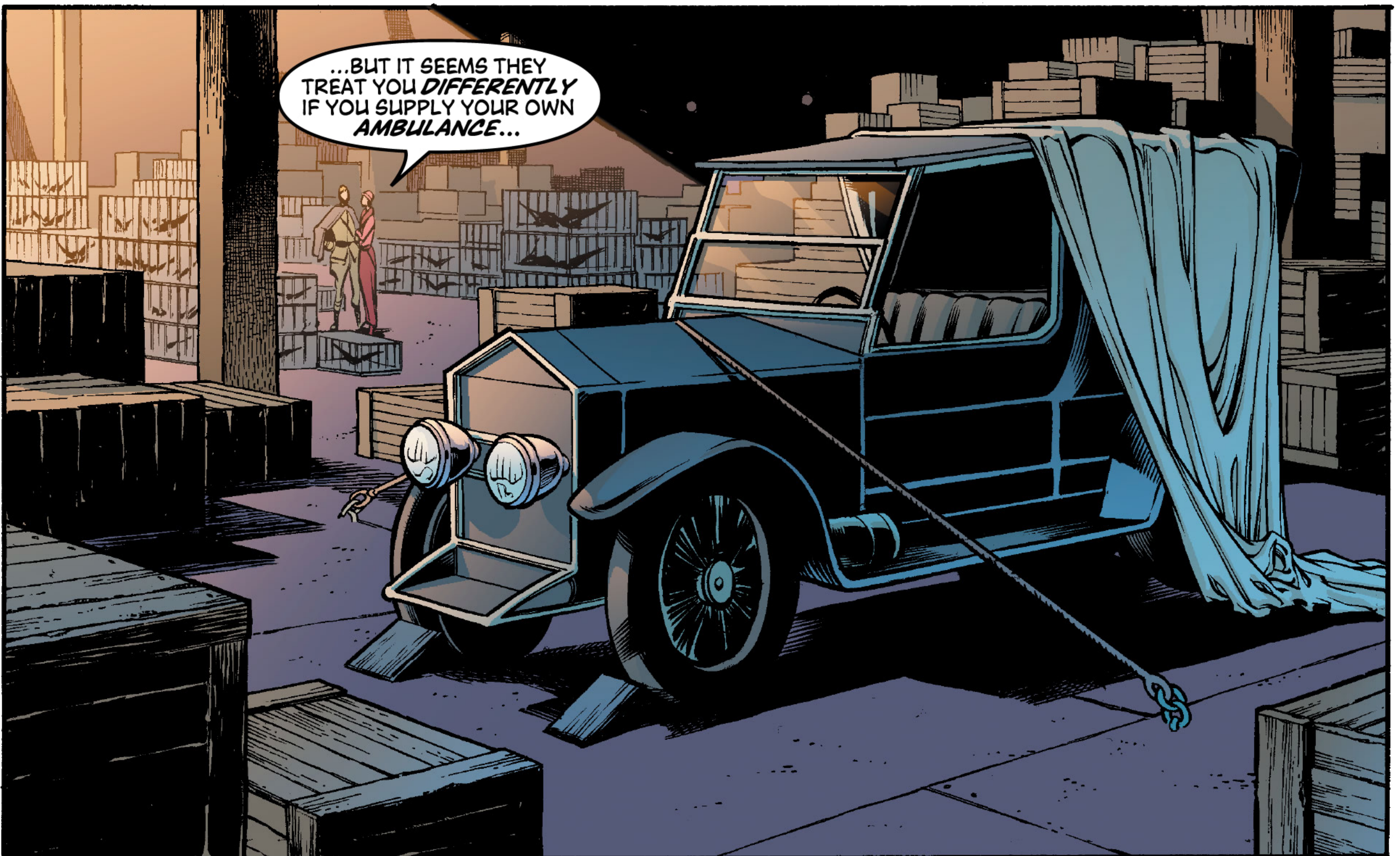
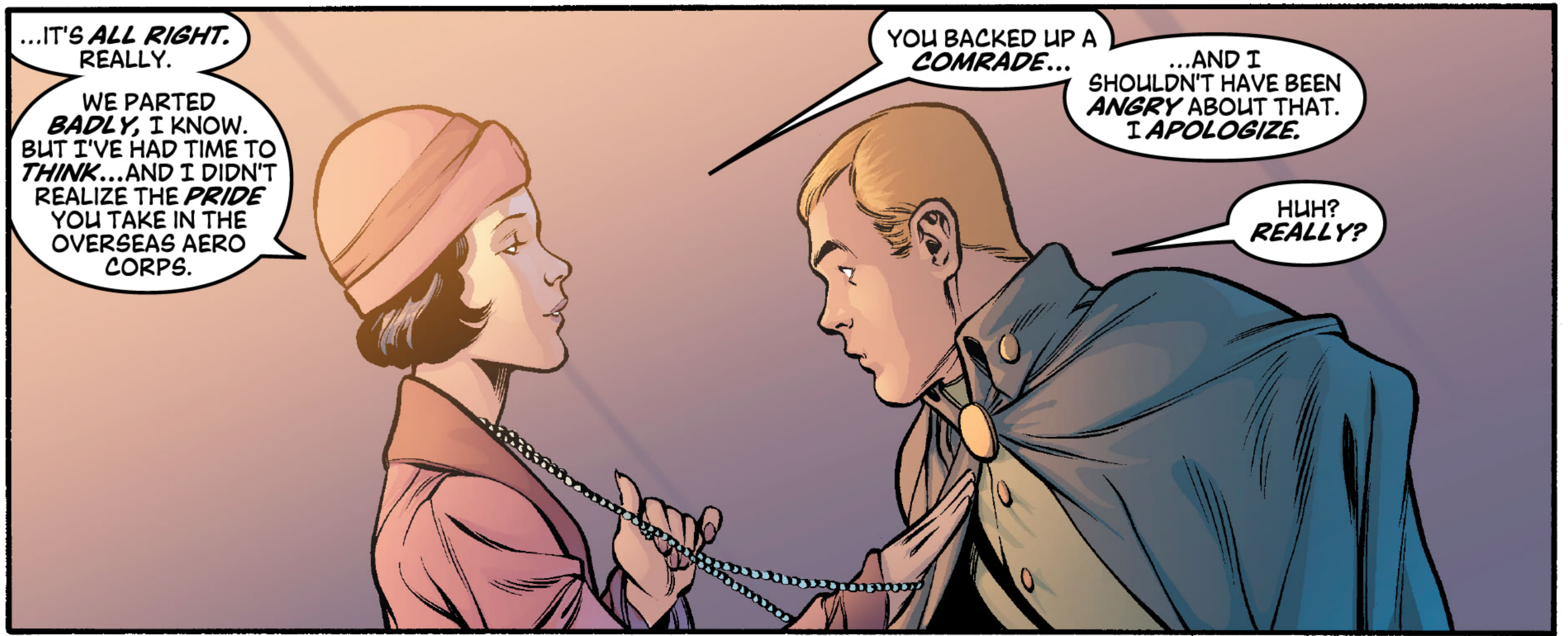


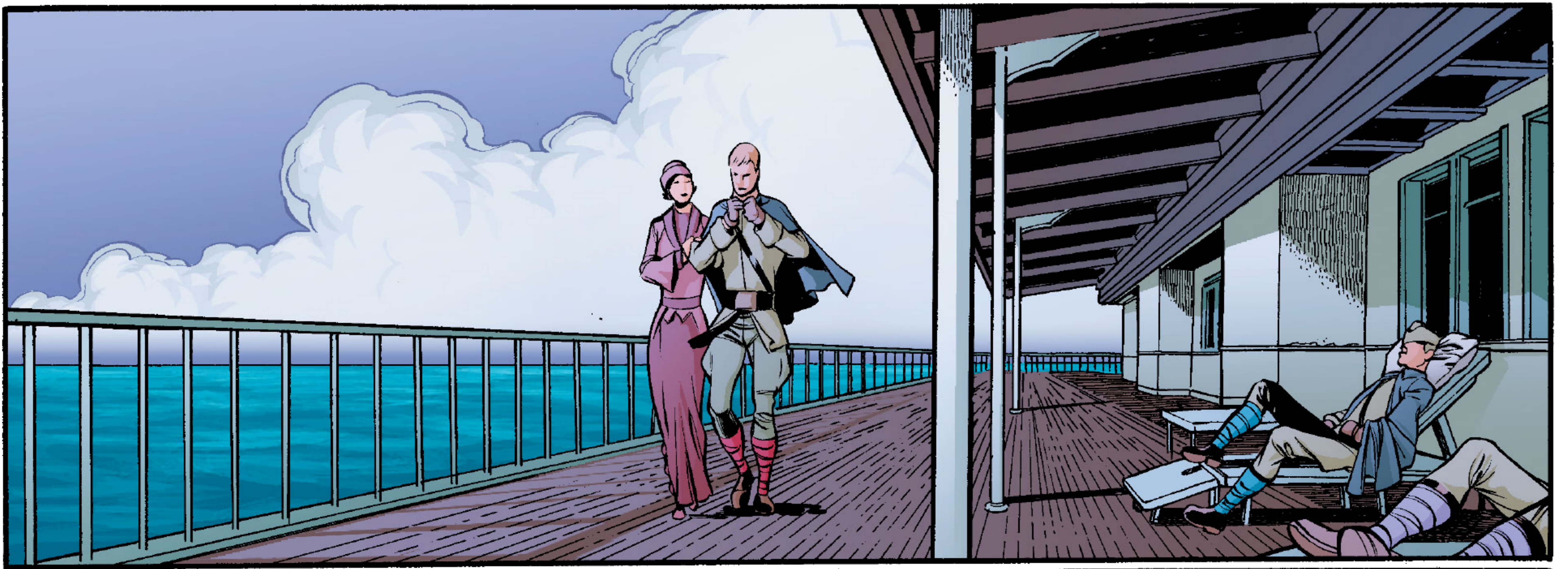
UH...AND THESE
PUTTEES?

THIS IS SKIN
THE MOTHER
DRAGON **SHEDS**
AFTER GIVING BIRTH,
SO **THEY** HELP
CREATE A BOND
TOO --

-- BUT I'D
KINDA LIKE TO BE
FRIENDS AS
WELL, SO --

FLETCHER...





AND THEN SHE SAID, "LIEUTENANT..."

"...THAT WAS MY SISTER!"

HOW AM I LIKING BEING AN AIRMAN? TO BE HONEST, GRACE... I REALLY DON'T KNOW.

HAW!

YOU SEE THOSE MEN OVER THERE?

THEY LOOK SCRUFFY. OLD, AND TIRED. AND THEIR JOKES...!

THEY'RE COMBAT VETERANS. HEADED BACK TO THE FRONT. THEY'RE SO RELAXED, SO CONFIDENT -- I CAN'T HELP THINKING --

-- THAT THEY KNOW SOMETHING I DON'T.

I LOVE TO FLY. BUT I FEEL... I FEEL LIKE THEY'RE THE REAL AIRMEN...

...AND I'M STILL JUST A BLACKSMITH'S SON.

YOU'LL BE WONDERFUL, I'M SURE. BUT, UM, TELL ME ABOUT THE BOAT -- WHY DOES IT SAIL ABOVE THE WATER?

SHIP, NOT BOAT. AND IT'S ALL ABOUT SPEED.

IRON DISRUPTS MAGIC, SO THE SPELLS THAT MAKE A LEY-SHIP SO FAST CAN'T WORK THROUGH IRON OR STEEL. SO WE HAVE A WOOD AND BRASS HULL.

BUT THAT MEANS THAT IF THE HULL TOUCHES THE WATER, THE MAGIC COULD BE SENSED THROUGH IT. AND IT COULD ATTRACT --

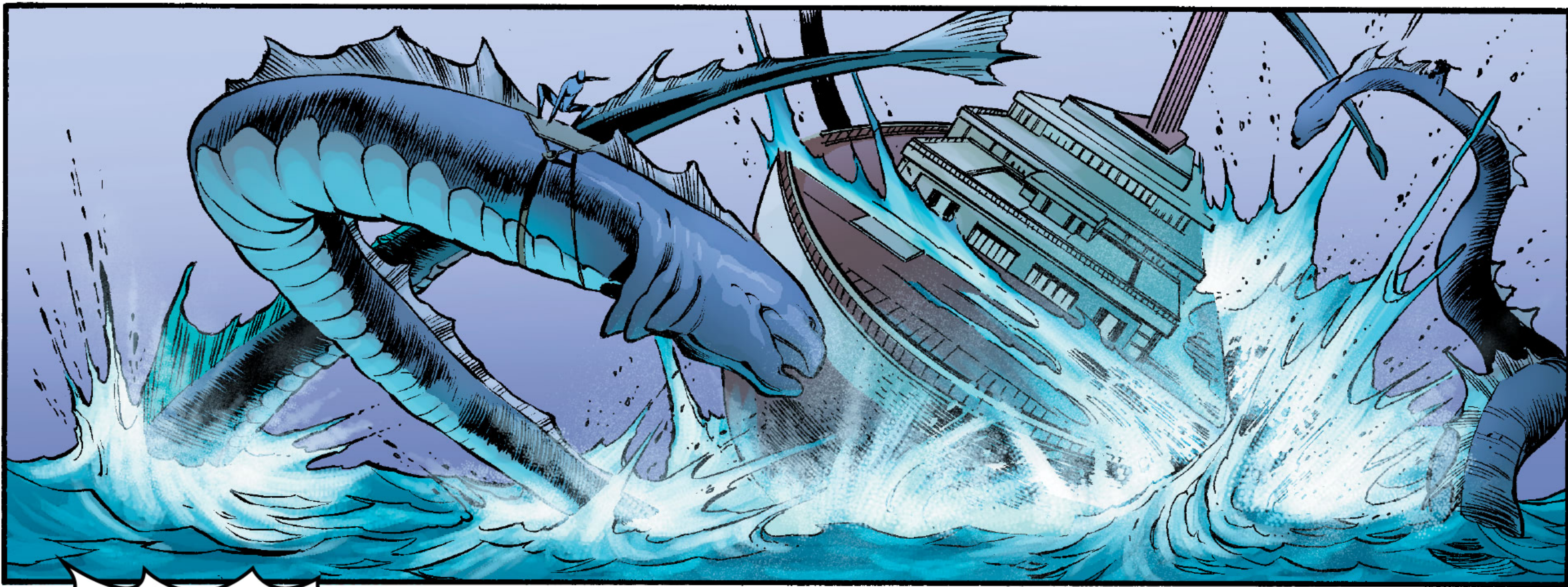
A-OOGAA-OOGA

A-OOGAA-OOGA

GRACE!

WHAT -- WHAT IS --





UNTERSEEMEN!

WE'RE UNDER ATTACK! THANK GOD THE PRESERVER FIELD KEPT US FROM GOING OVERB--

-- OH, NO!

**HAHAHA
HAHAHA**

SQUAD ROLAND! IN THE AIR! IN THE AIR!

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONES WITH FULLY-CHARGED FLIGHT CHIPS --

-- THIS ONE'S YOURS!

I GUESS... THIS IS IT, JON... IT'S UP TO US...

YEAH!

ACTION AT LAST! I THOUGHT WE'D NEVER --

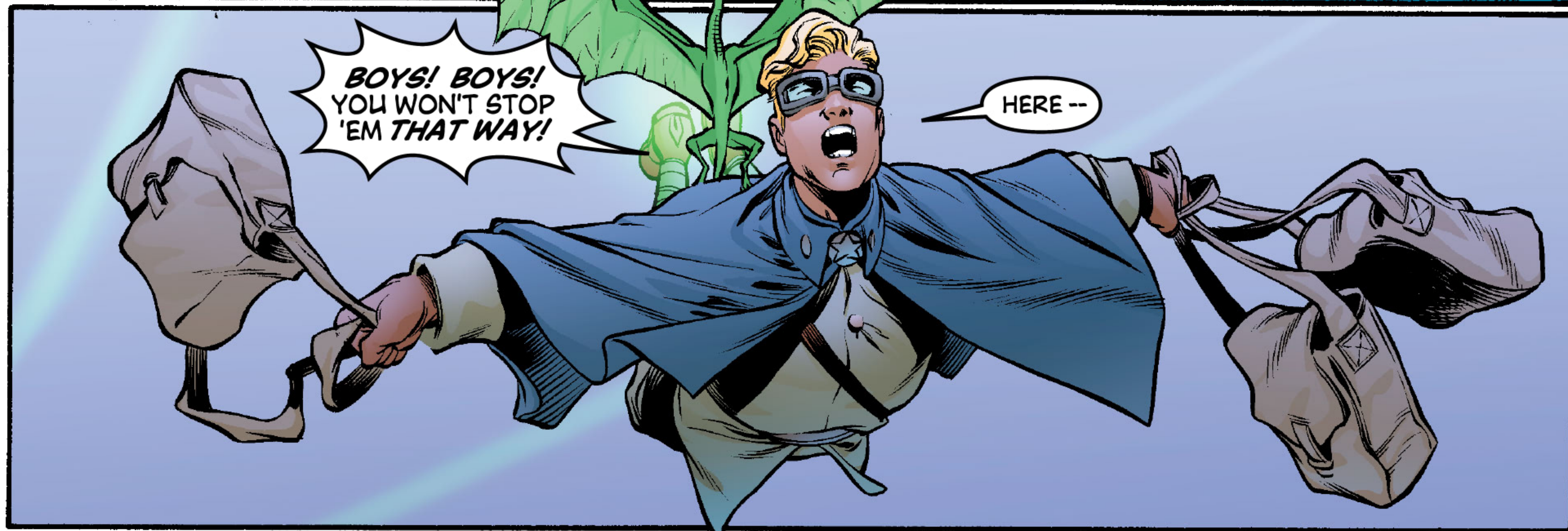
OUTTA THE WAY, LADIES! LET CAPABLE AIRMEN DO THEIR JOBS!

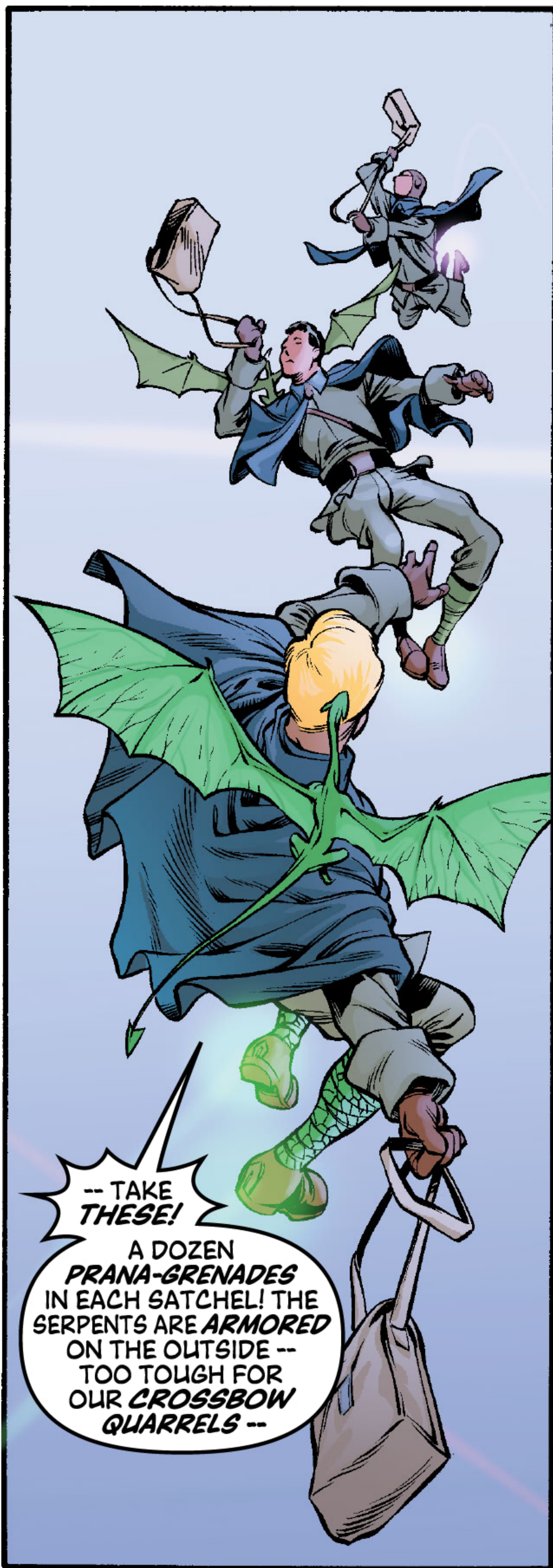
MITCH.

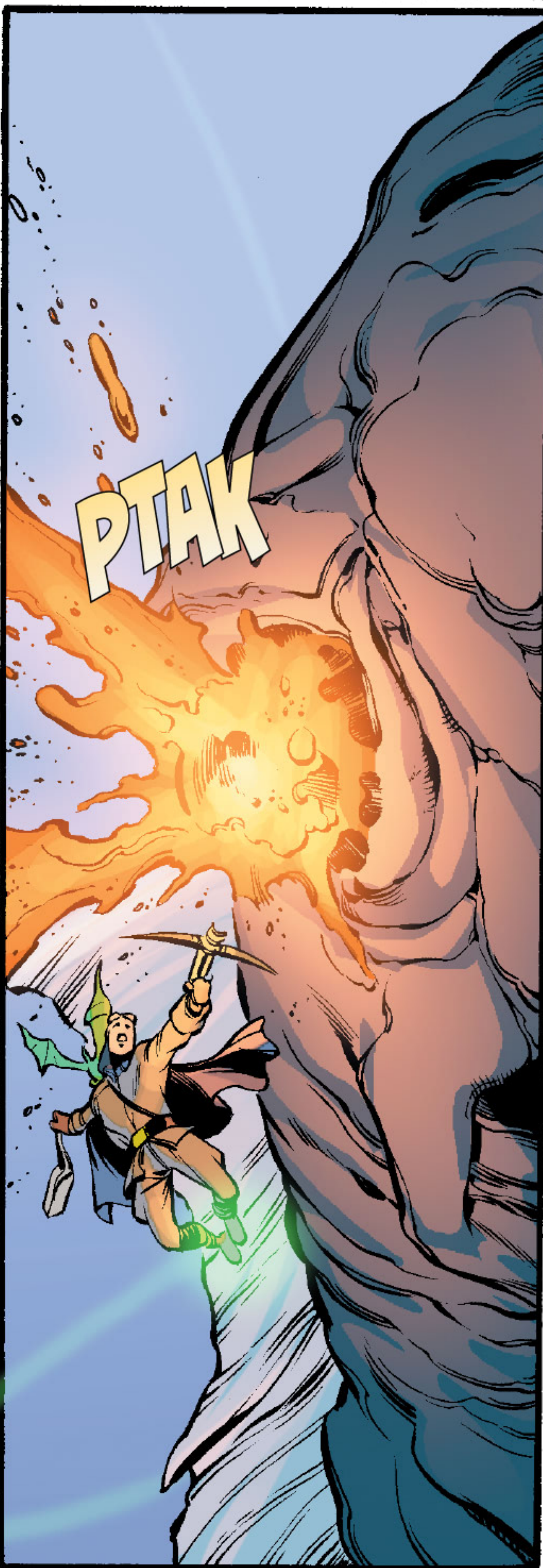
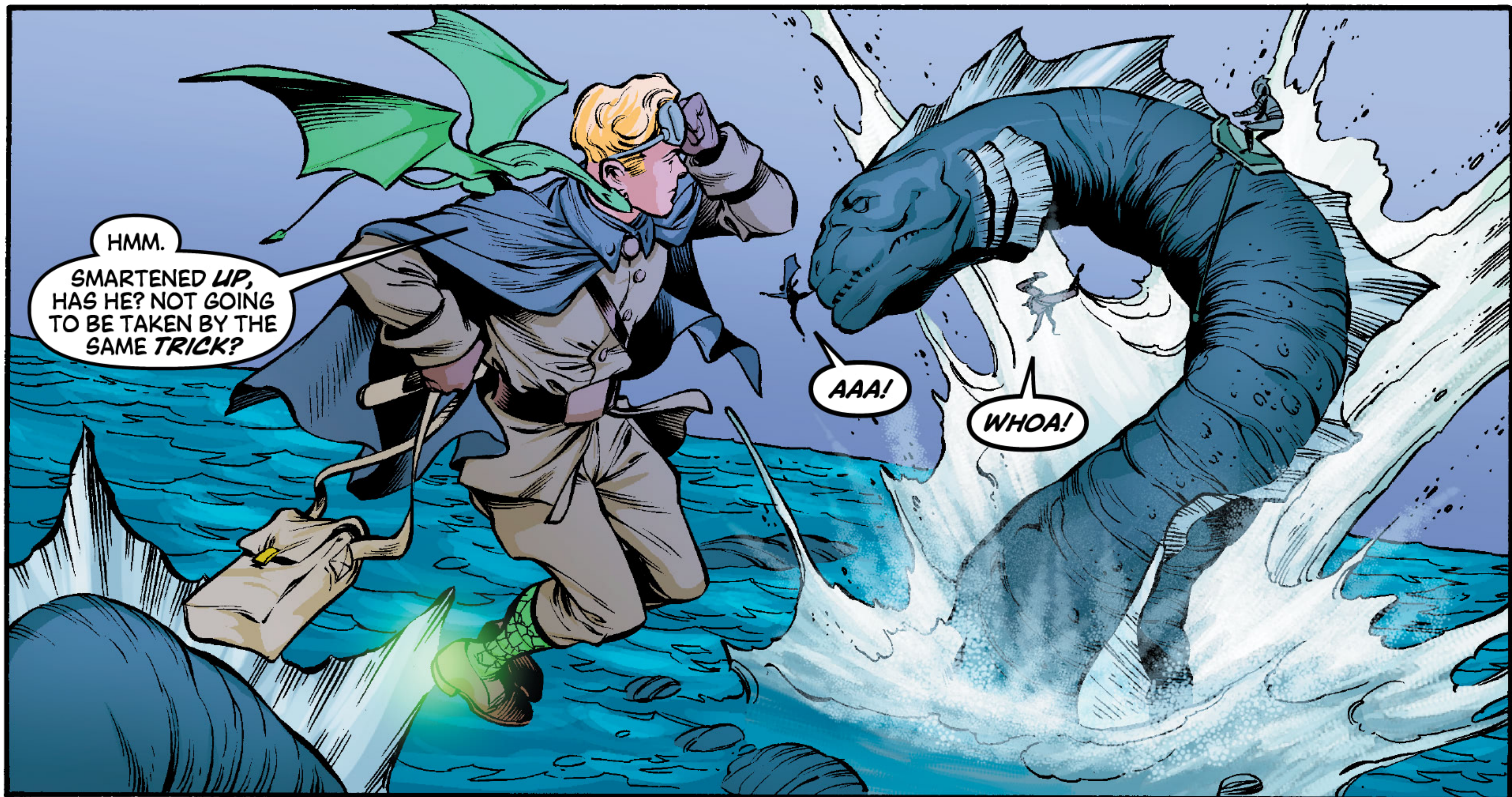
THAT MUSCLEBRAINED SACK OF --

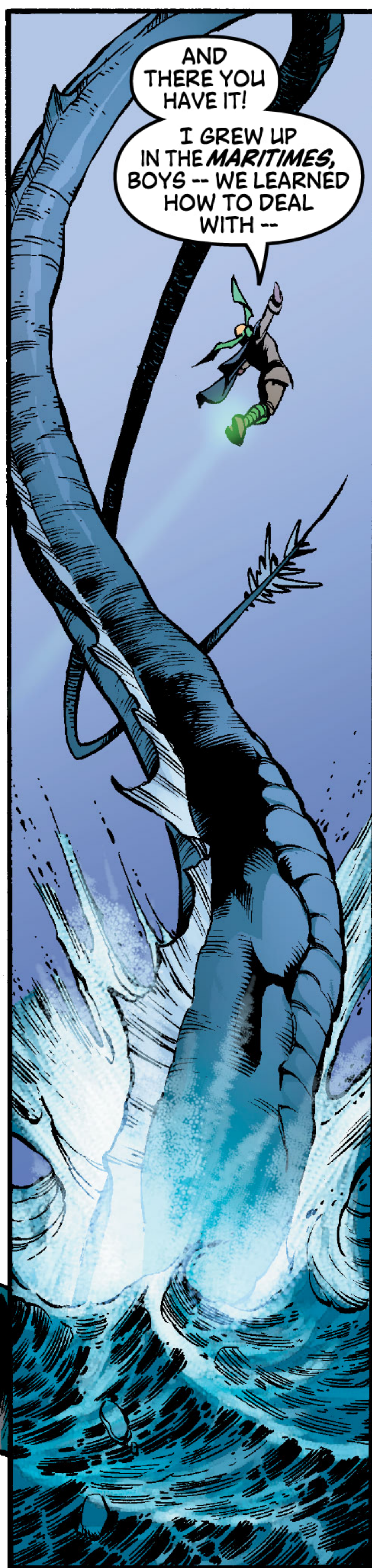
DON'T WORRY ABOUT HIM, FLETCHER. HE'S A JERK.

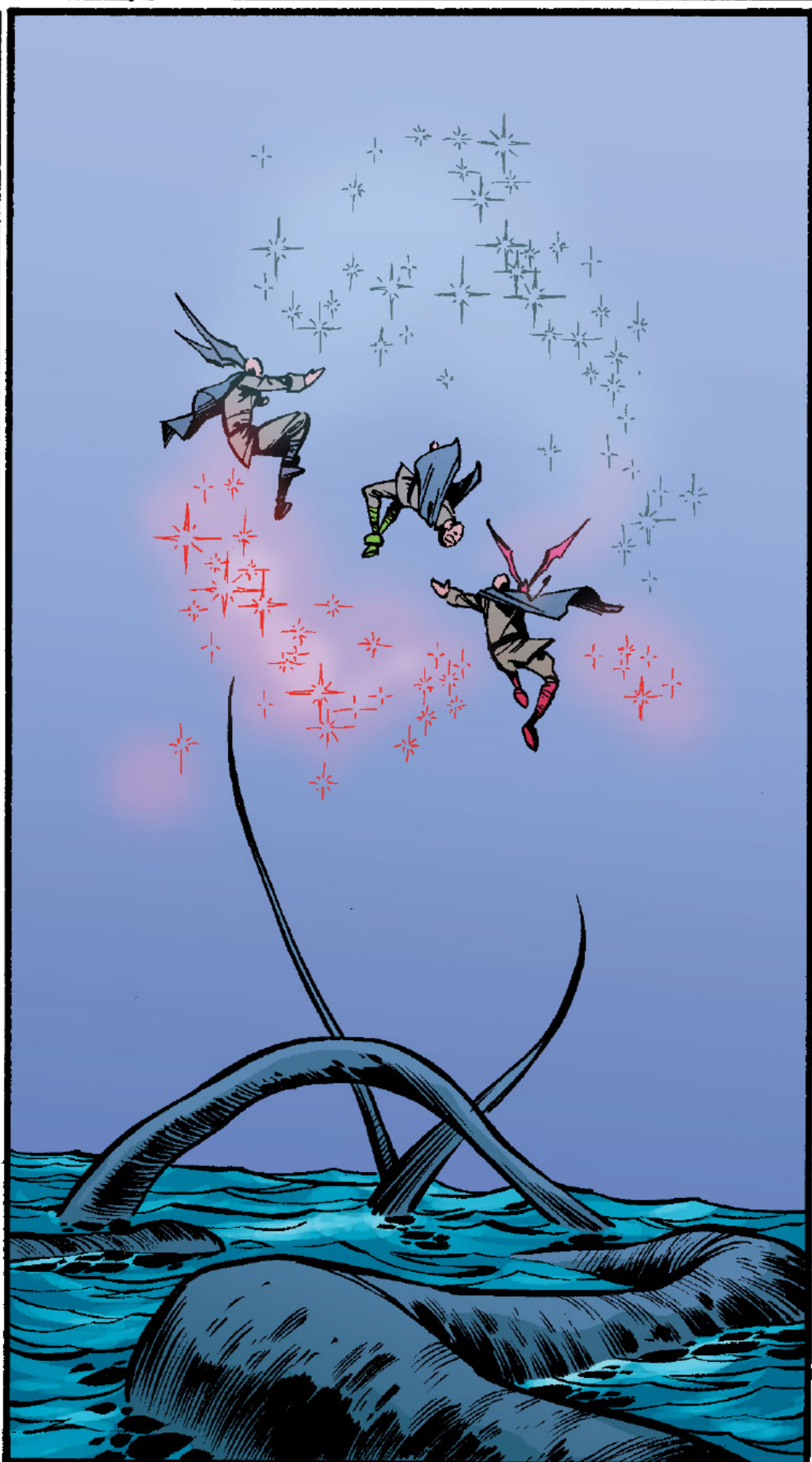
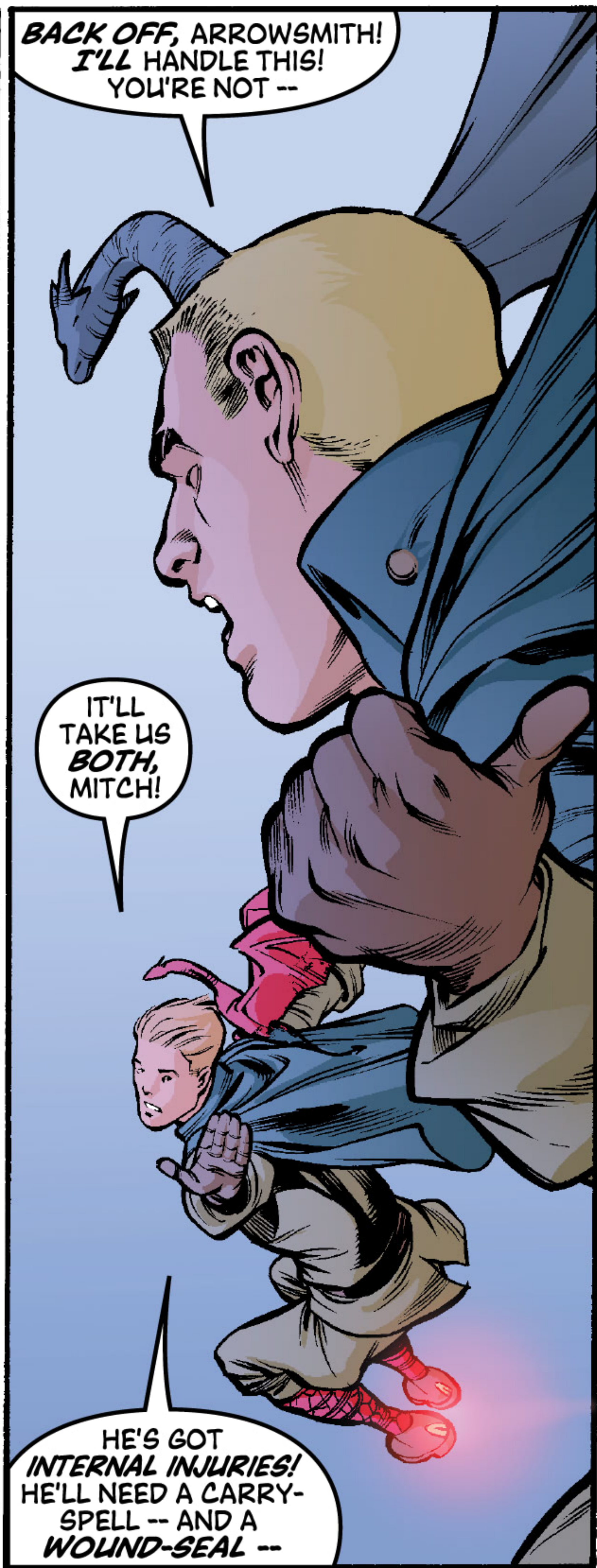
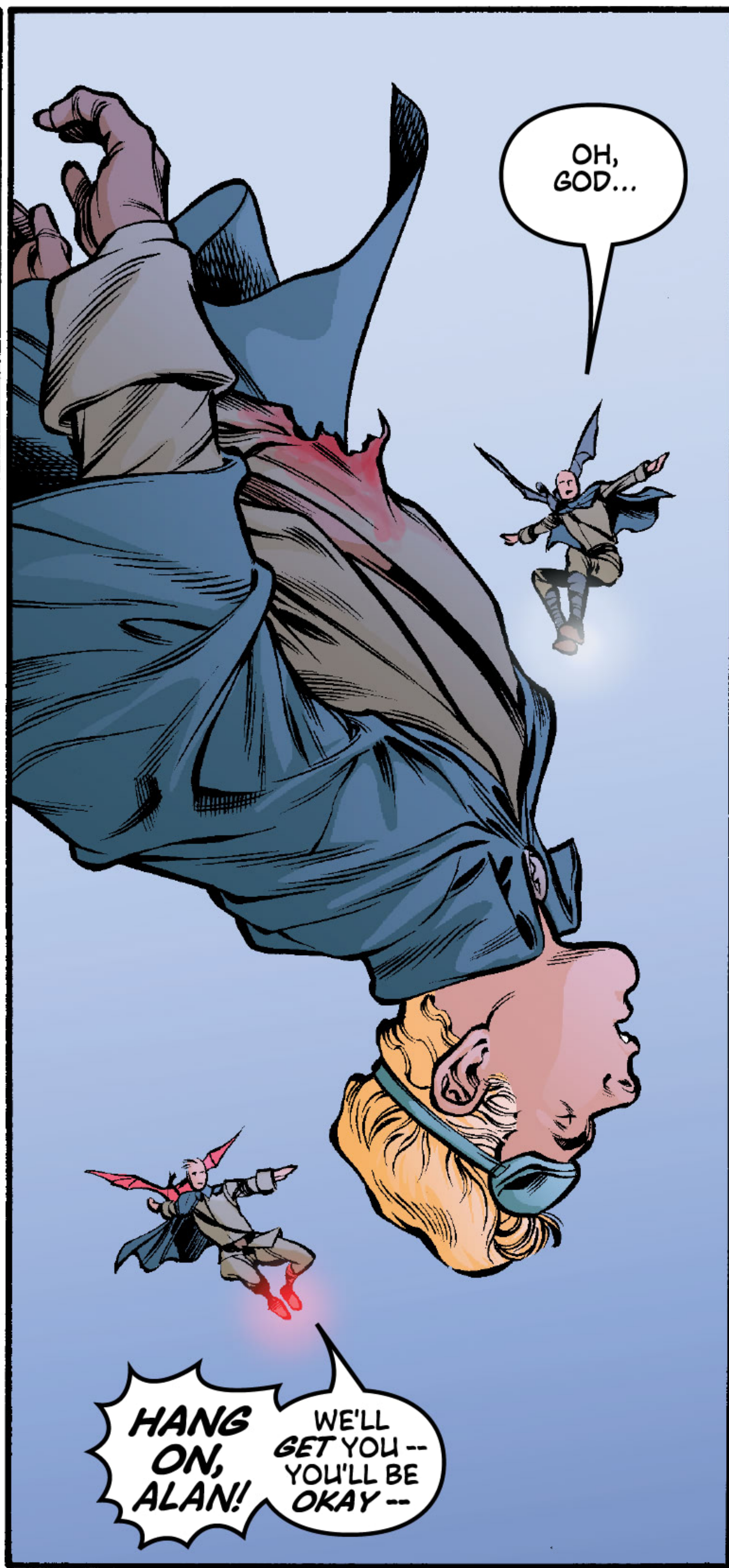
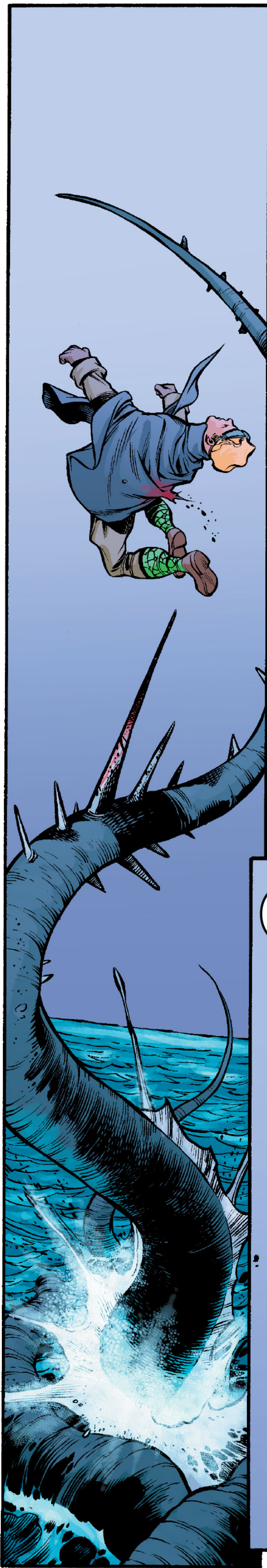
LET'S JUST --

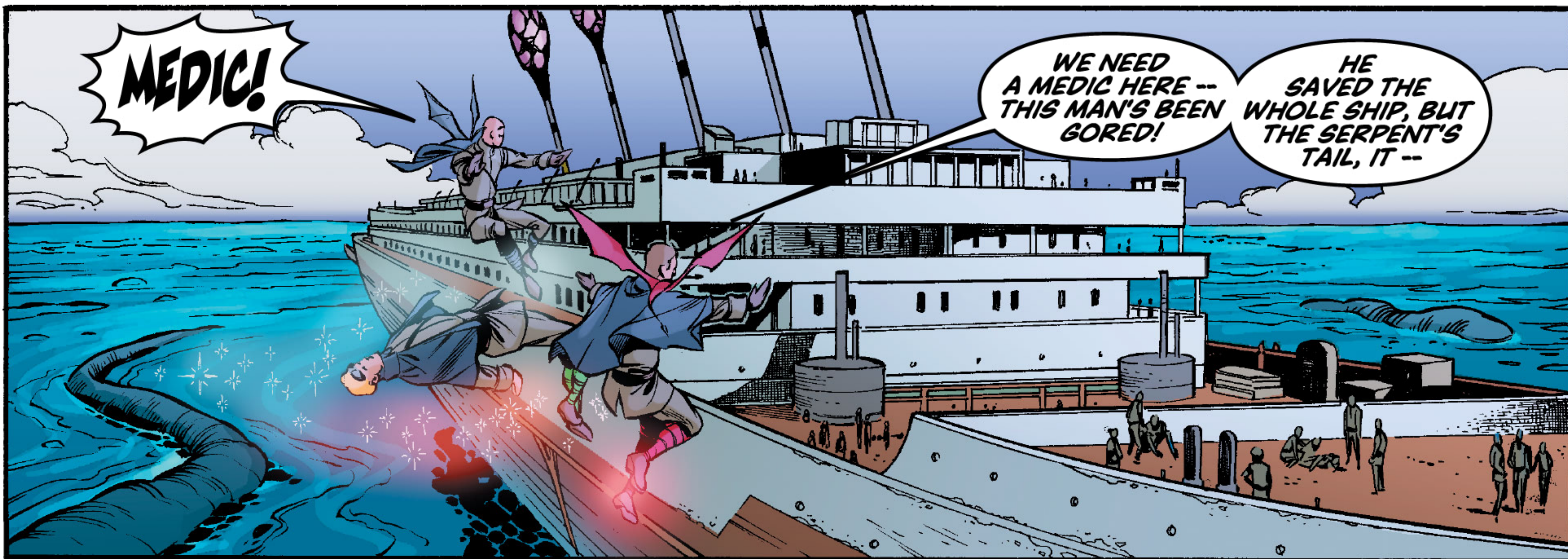












MEDIC!

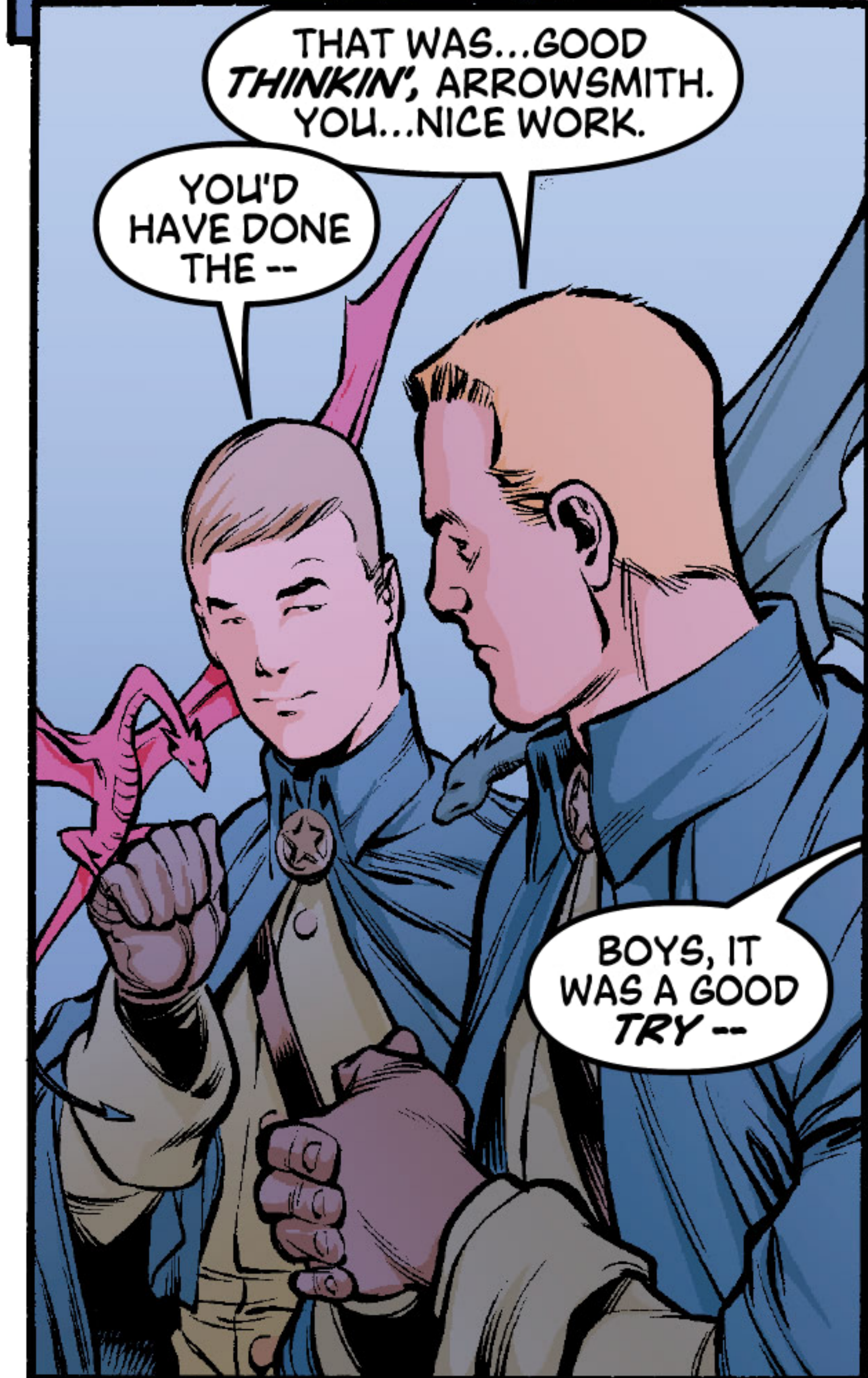
WE NEED
A MEDIC HERE --
THIS MAN'S BEEN
GORED!

HE
SAVED THE
WHOLE SHIP, BUT
THE SERPENT'S
TAIL, IT --



WE GOT A SEAL ON
HIM *FAST* --

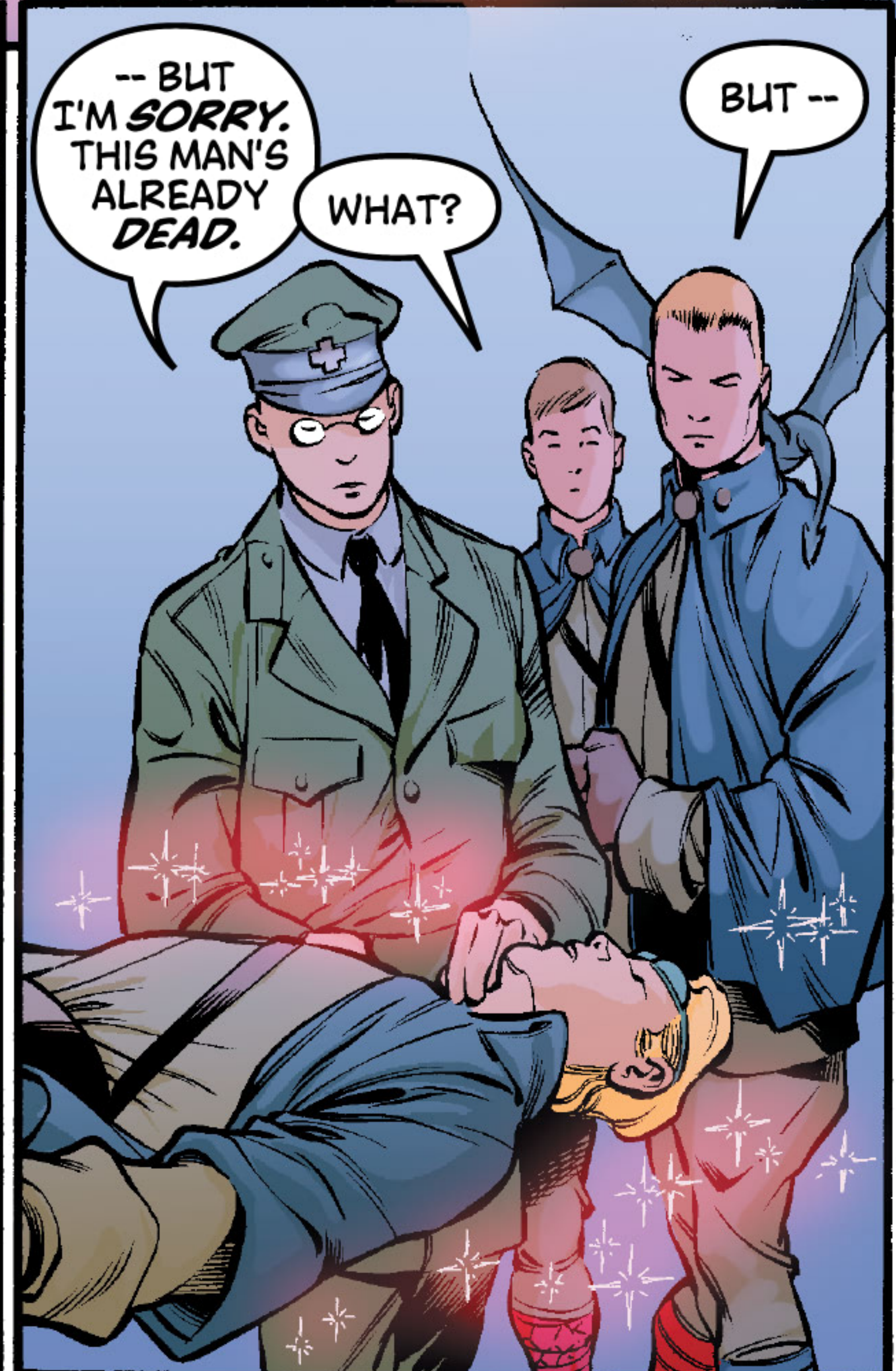
I'LL TAKE
IT FROM *HERE*,
SON.



THAT WAS...GOOD
THINKIN', ARROWSMITH.
YOU...NICE WORK.

YOU'D
HAVE DONE
THE --

BOYS, IT
WAS A GOOD
TRY --



-- BUT
I'M *SORRY*.
THIS MAN'S
ALREADY
DEAD.

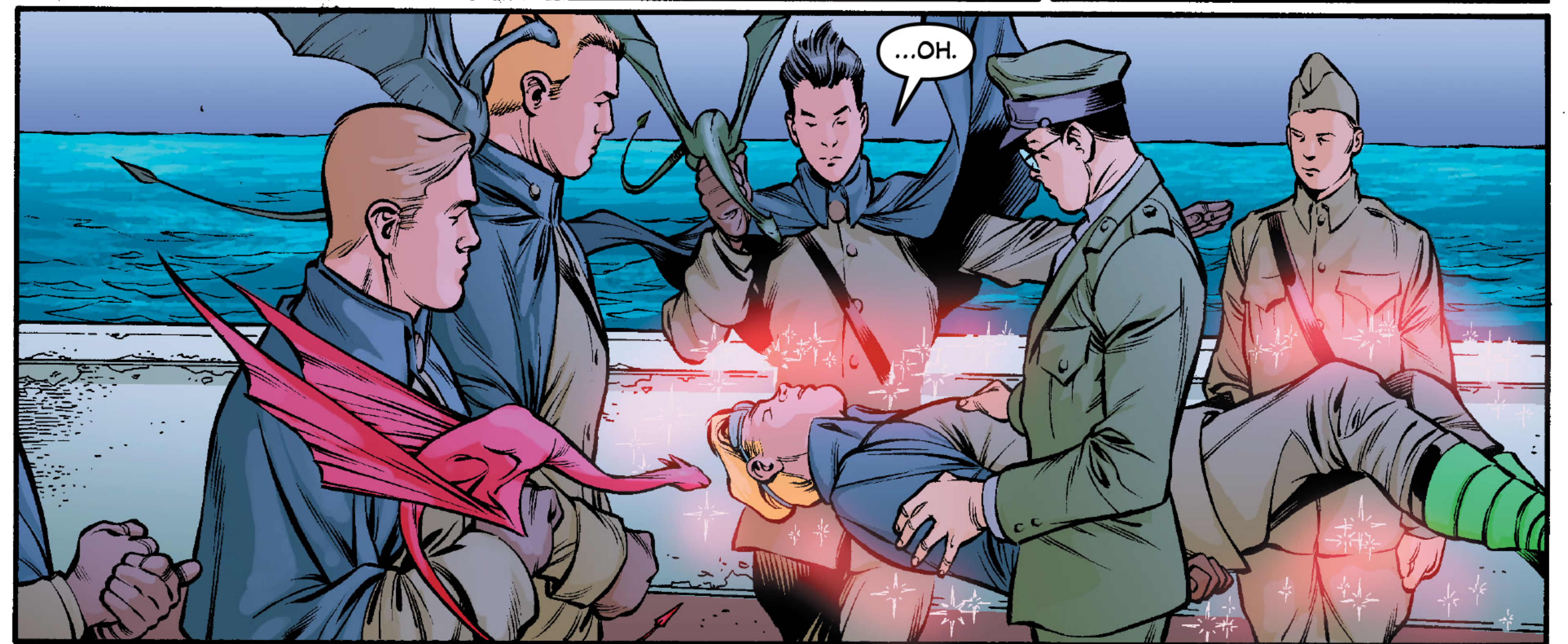
WHAT?

BUT --

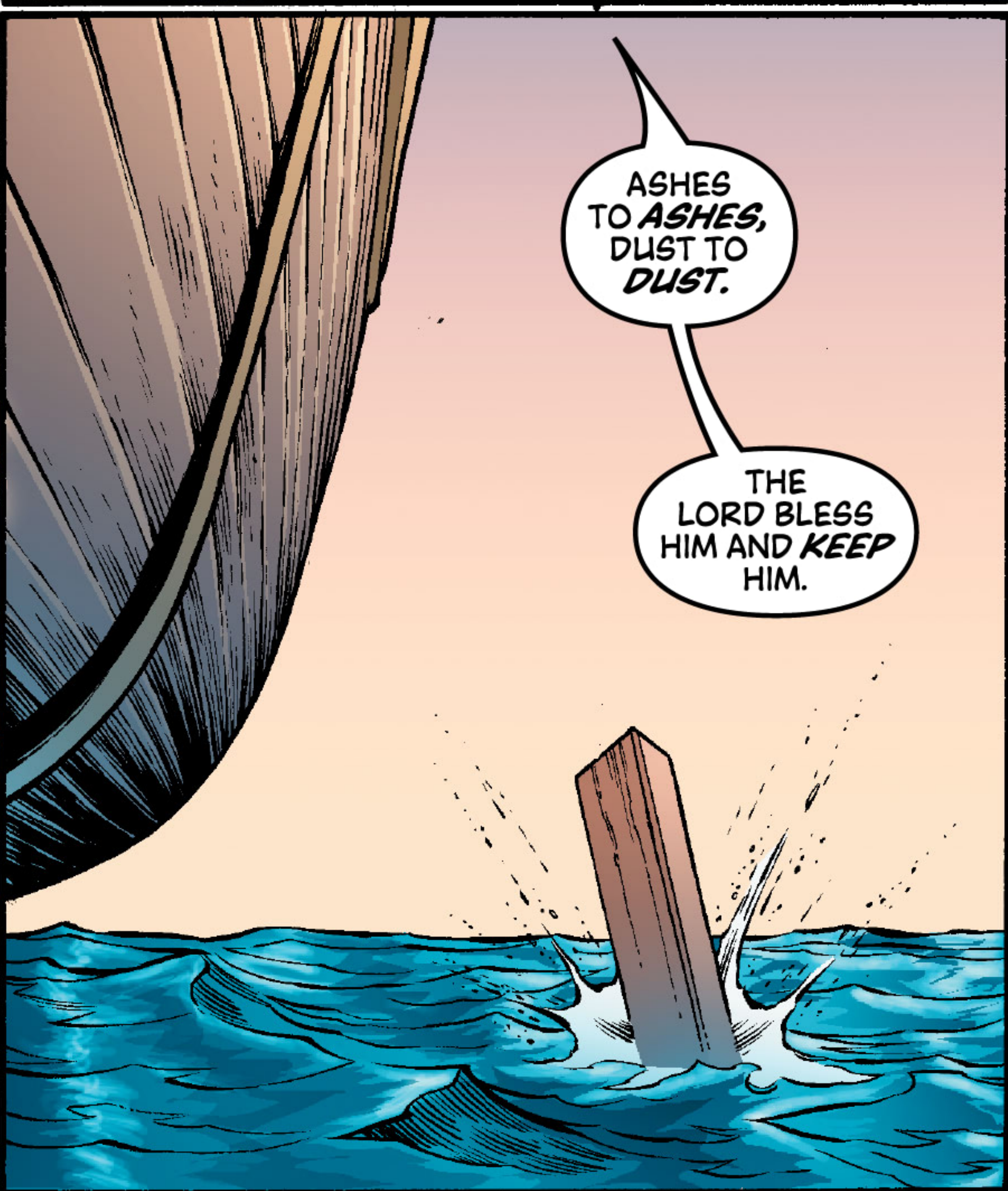
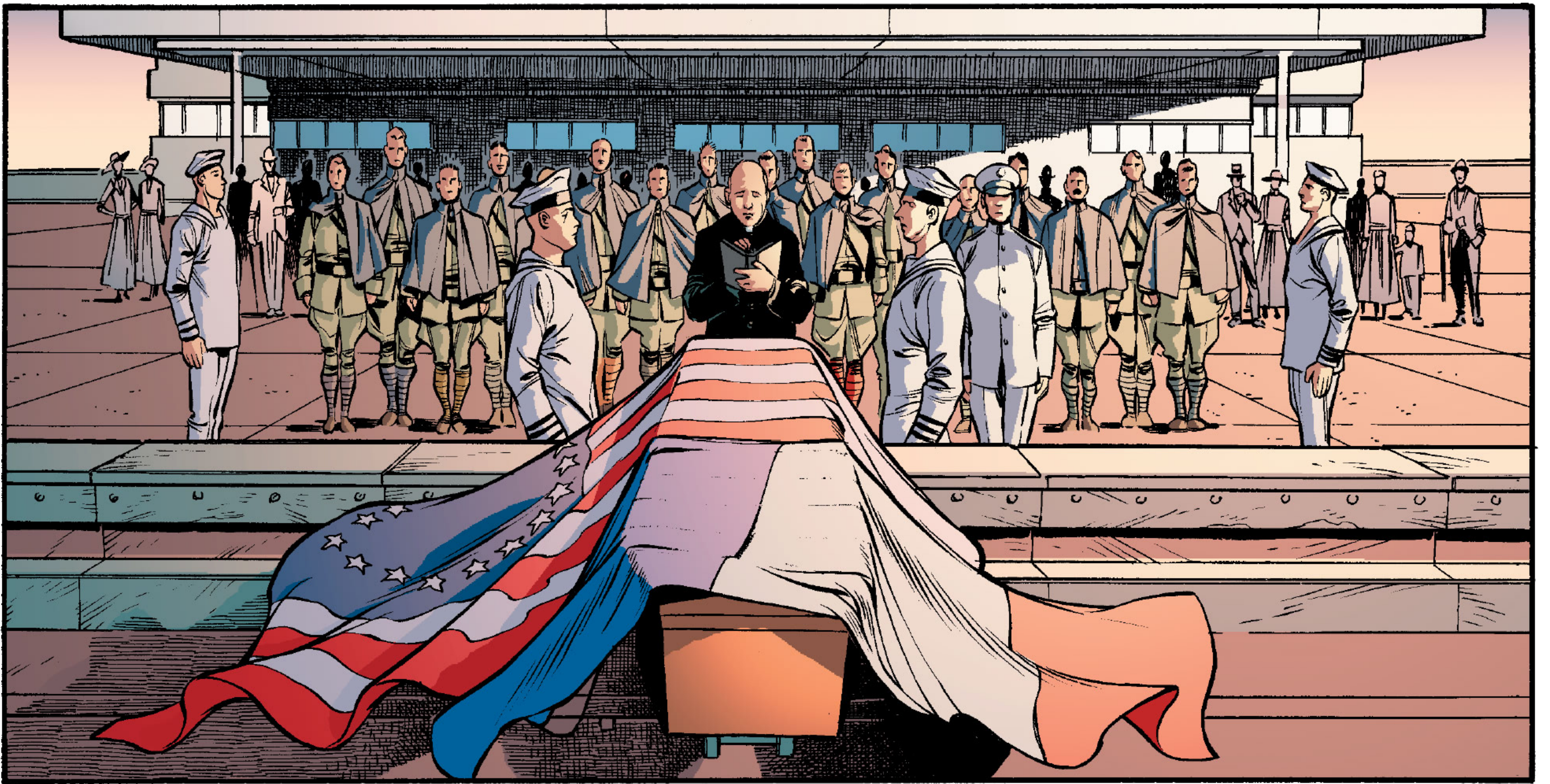


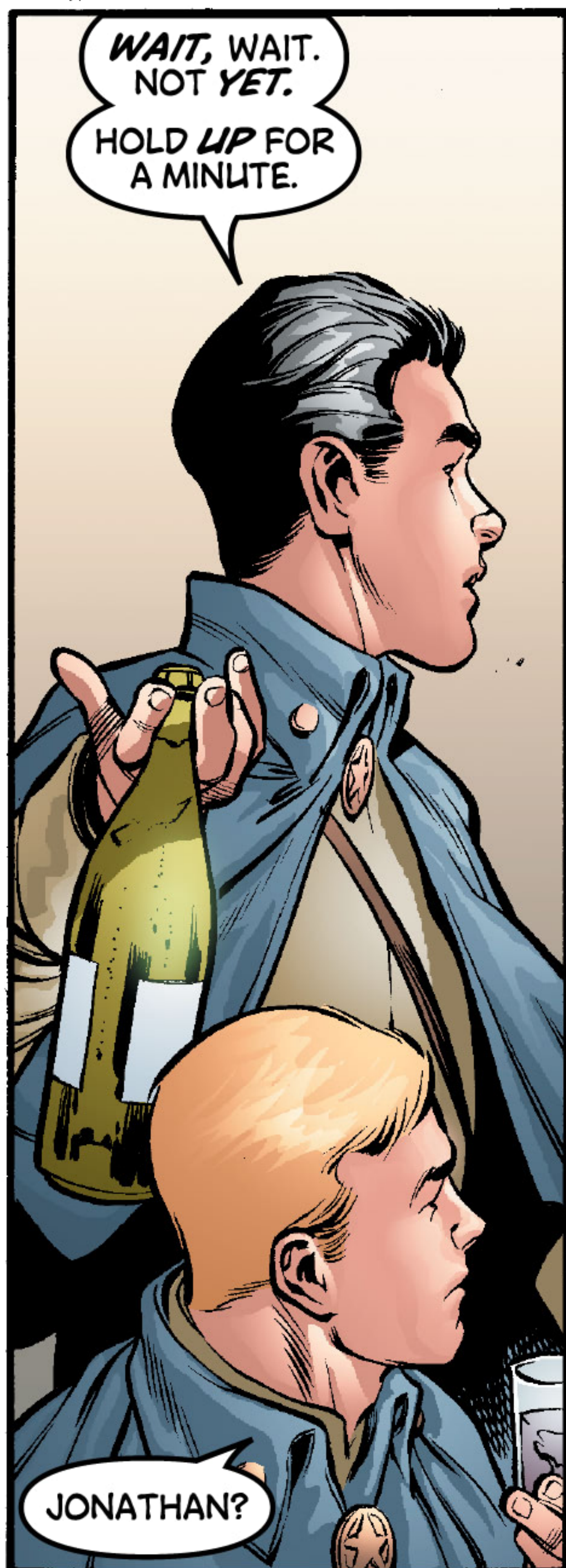
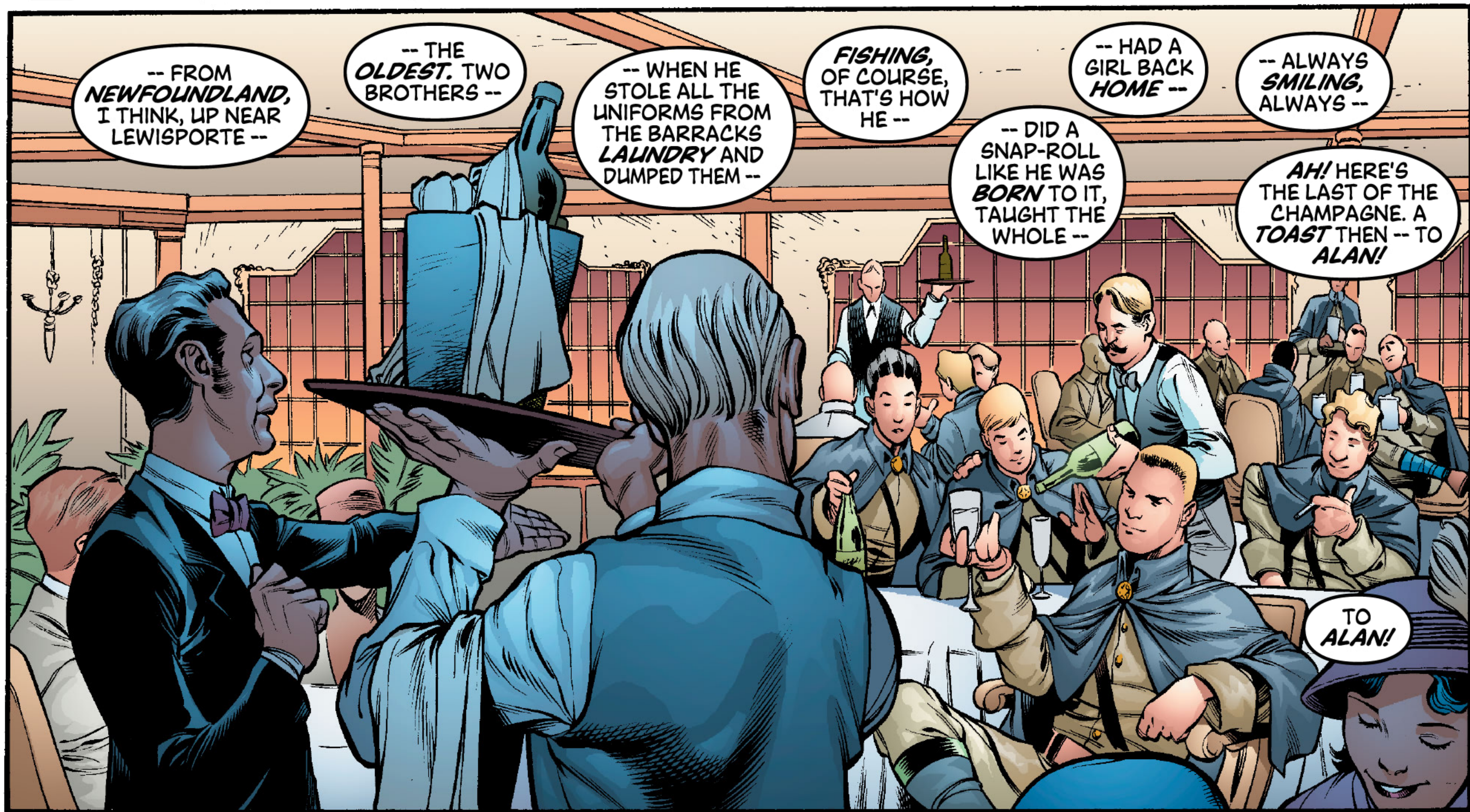
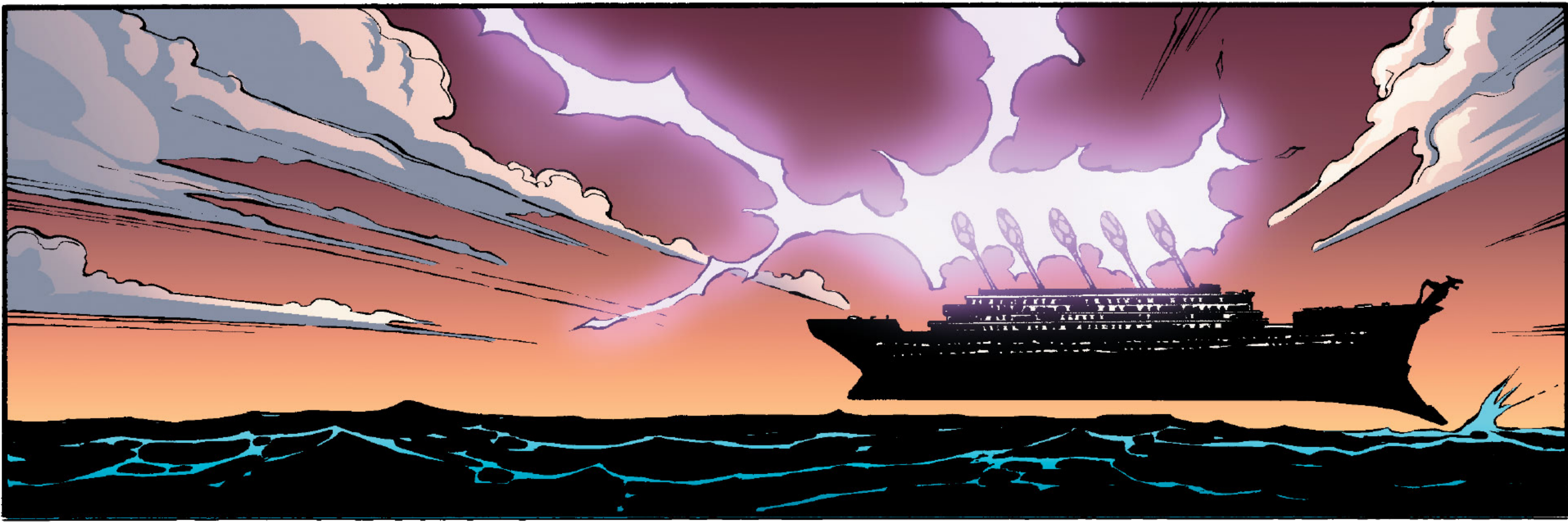
THAT WAS
SOMETHING,
HUH?

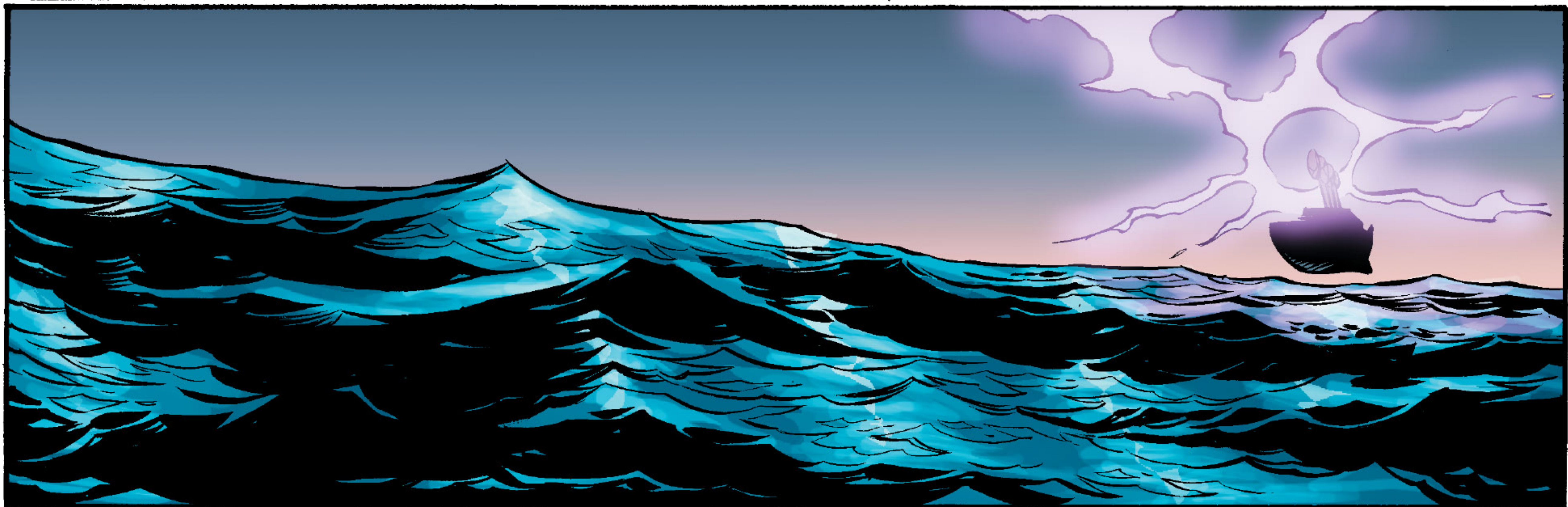
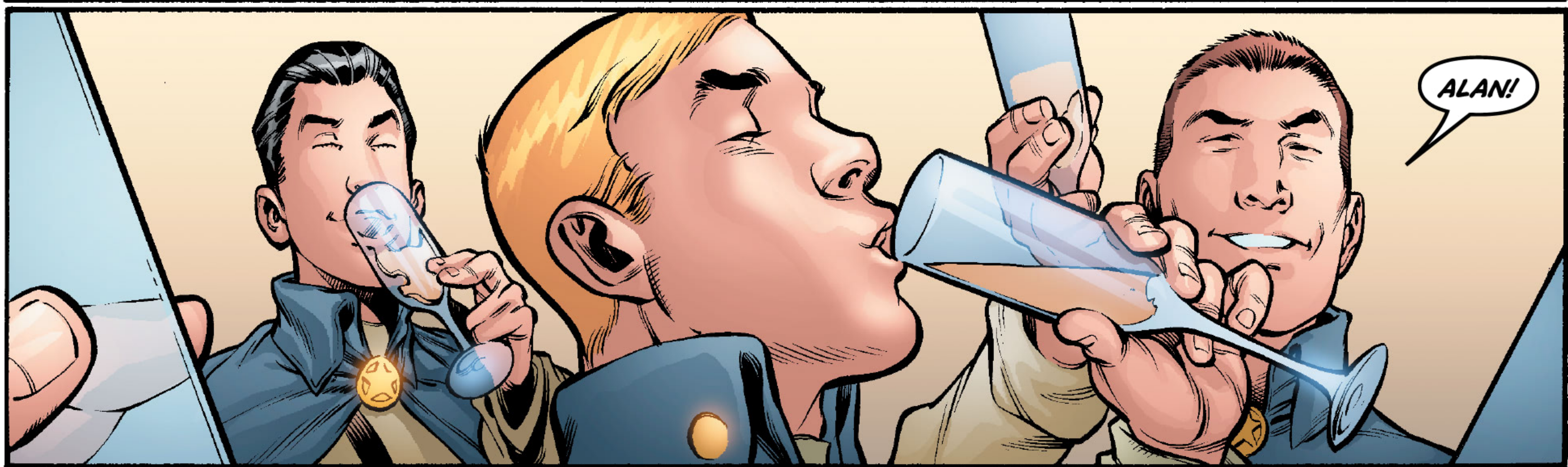
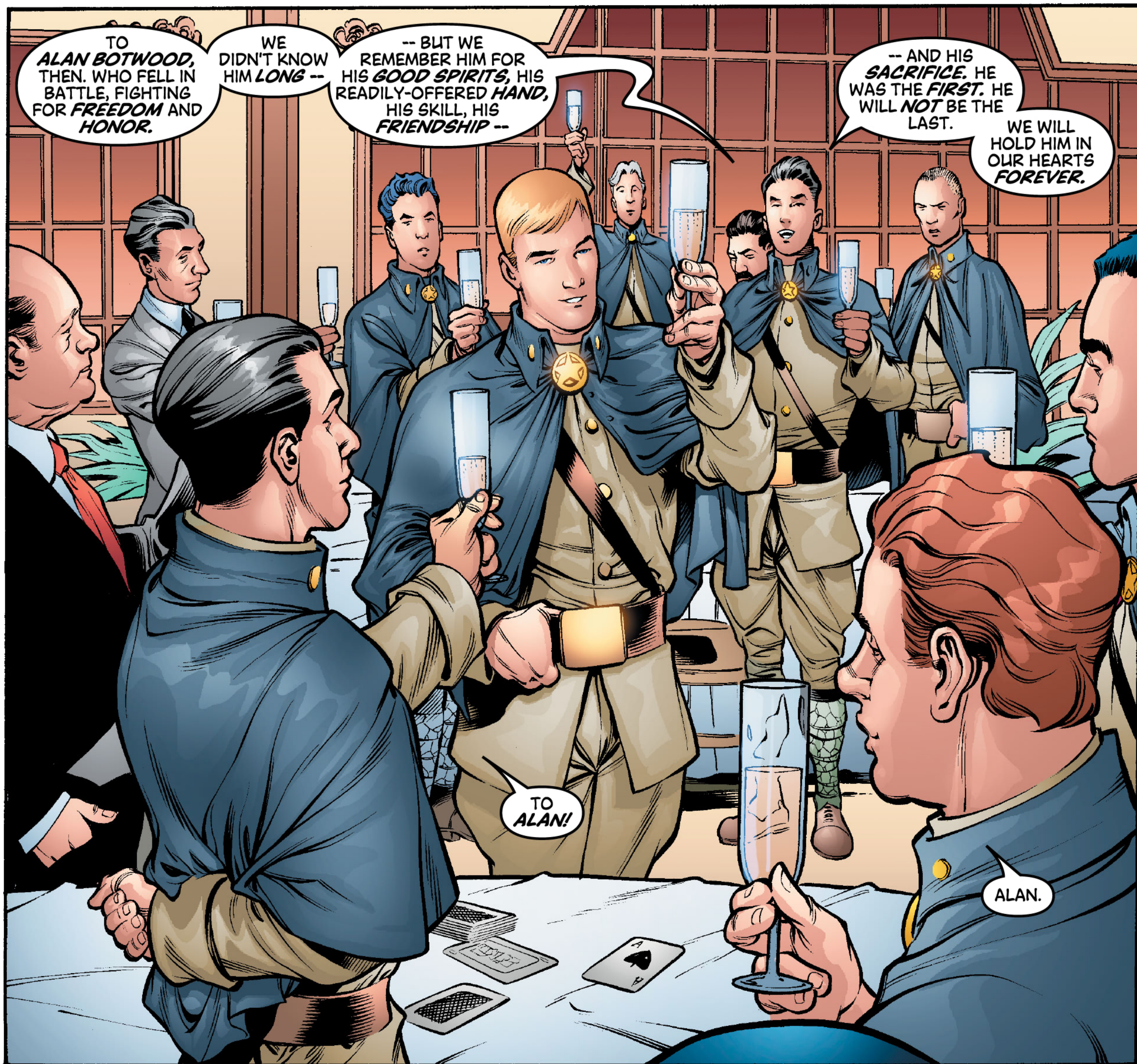
HOW'S
OL' *ALAN*? IS
HE GONNA
BE...?



...OH.









THEY SAY IT'S **DOWN** THERE SOMEWHERE, GRACE. NOBODY KNOWS **WHERE**. WE **COULD** BE PASSING RIGHT OVER IT NOW.

HM?

ATLANTIS. SUNKEN **ATLANTIS**, THE BIRTHPLACE OF **MAGIC**. I WONDER...

...I WONDER IF ALAN WILL **FIND** IT...



I KNOW HE WAS A **FRIEND** OF YOURS. JUST THE OTHER DAY, YOU WERE THROWING **ROLLS** AT EACH OTHER AT BREAKFAST. AND NOW...

IS THIS... ARE YOU **ALL RIGHT**, FLETCHER?

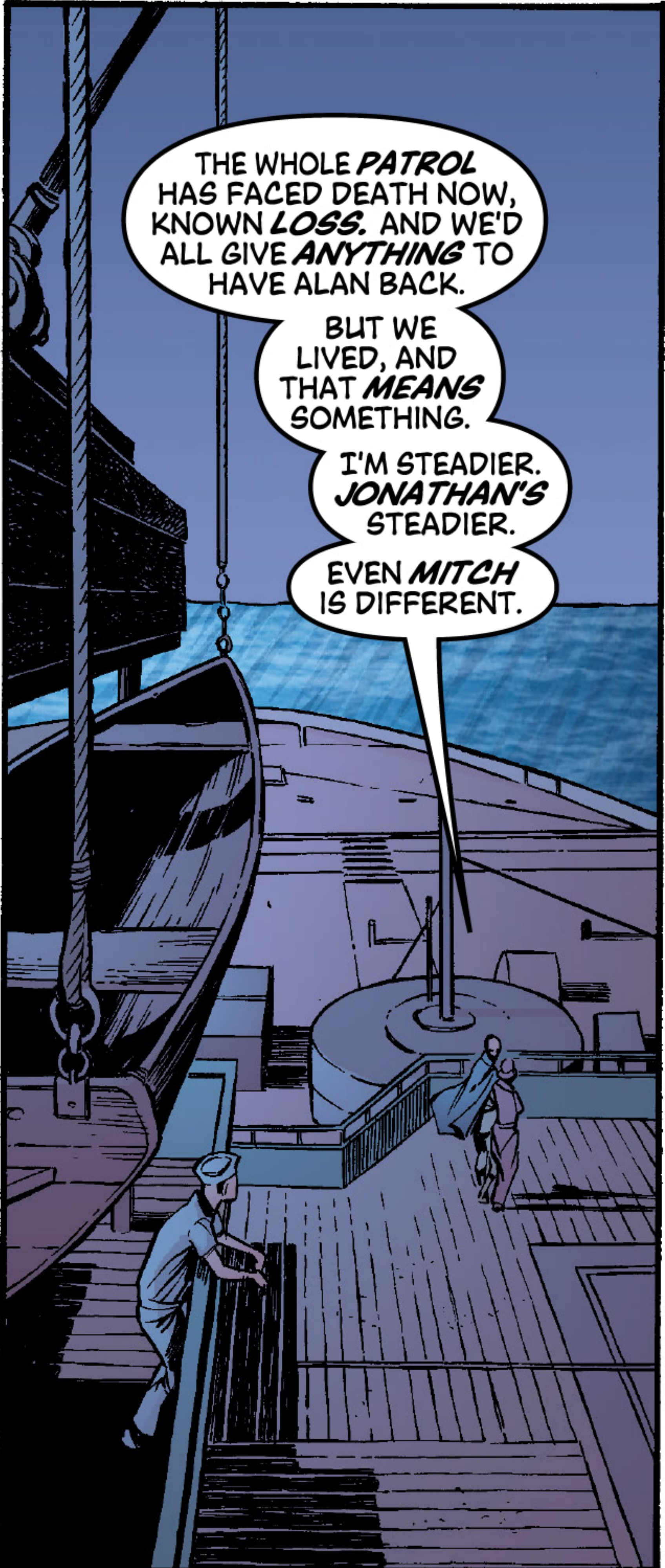
YOU KNOW...



...I THINK I **AM**.

WHAT HAPPENED TODAY WAS TERRIBLE. **AWFUL**. BUT I'M NOT **WORRIED** ANY MORE, NOT ABOUT BEING ABLE TO **HANDLE** IT.

I'VE **FACED** COMBAT, AND I DIDN'T **FREEZE**. I CAN **DO** IT.

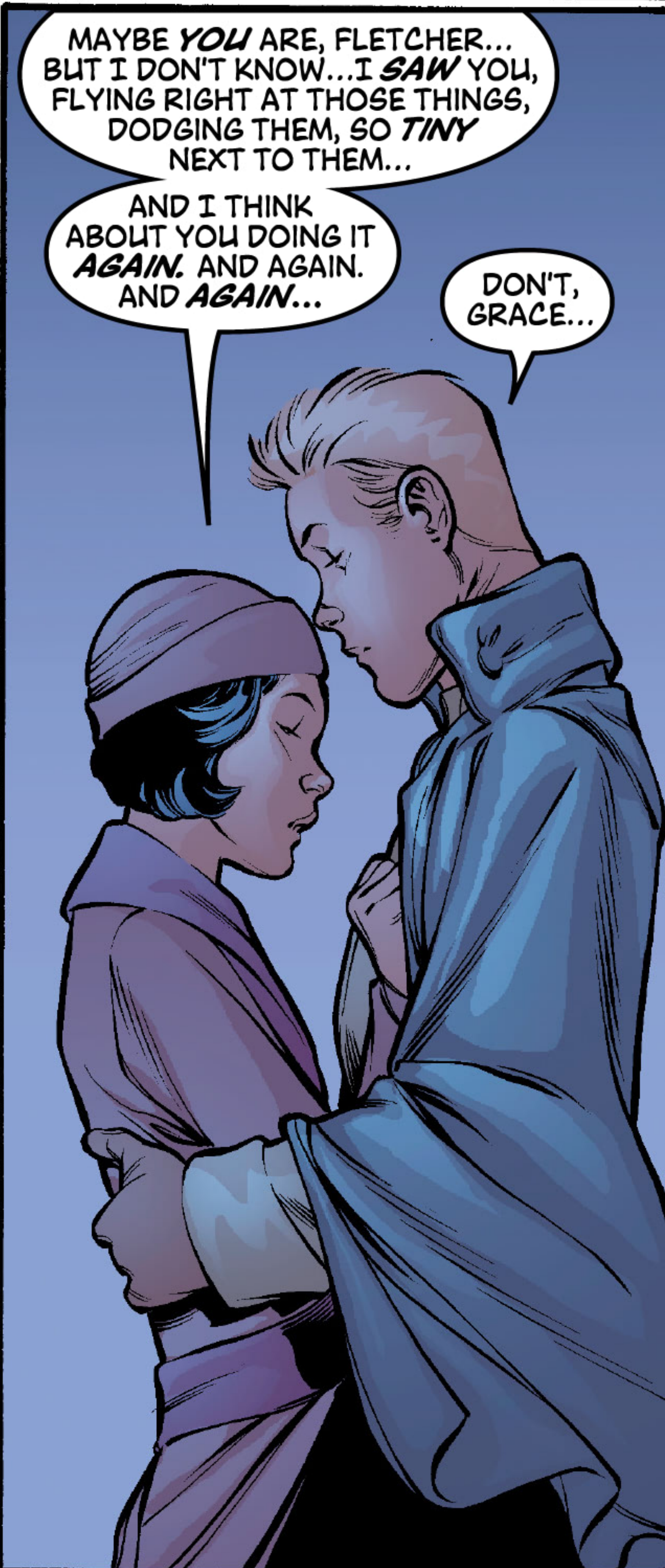


THE WHOLE **PATROL** HAS FACED DEATH NOW, KNOWN **LOSS**. AND WE'D ALL GIVE **ANYTHING** TO HAVE ALAN BACK.

BUT WE LIVED, AND THAT **MEANS** SOMETHING.

I'M STEADIER. **JONATHAN'S** STEADIER.

EVEN **MITCH** IS DIFFERENT.



MAYBE **YOU** ARE, FLETCHER... BUT I DON'T KNOW... I **SAW** YOU, FLYING RIGHT AT THOSE THINGS, DODGING THEM, SO **TINY** NEXT TO THEM...

AND I THINK ABOUT YOU DOING IT **AGAIN**. AND AGAIN. AND **AGAIN**...

DON'T, GRACE...



DON'T.

Dear Winnie,
Well, we got here.

We arrived in Le Havre today.
I was in New Jersey a week ago,
and now I'm in Europe. Can you
believe it?

Le Havre's a very pretty harbor
town, you'd like it. They had a
welcoming ceremony for us — the
mayor, the press, some others.

They seemed a little bored, though —
I think they've done a lot of them.

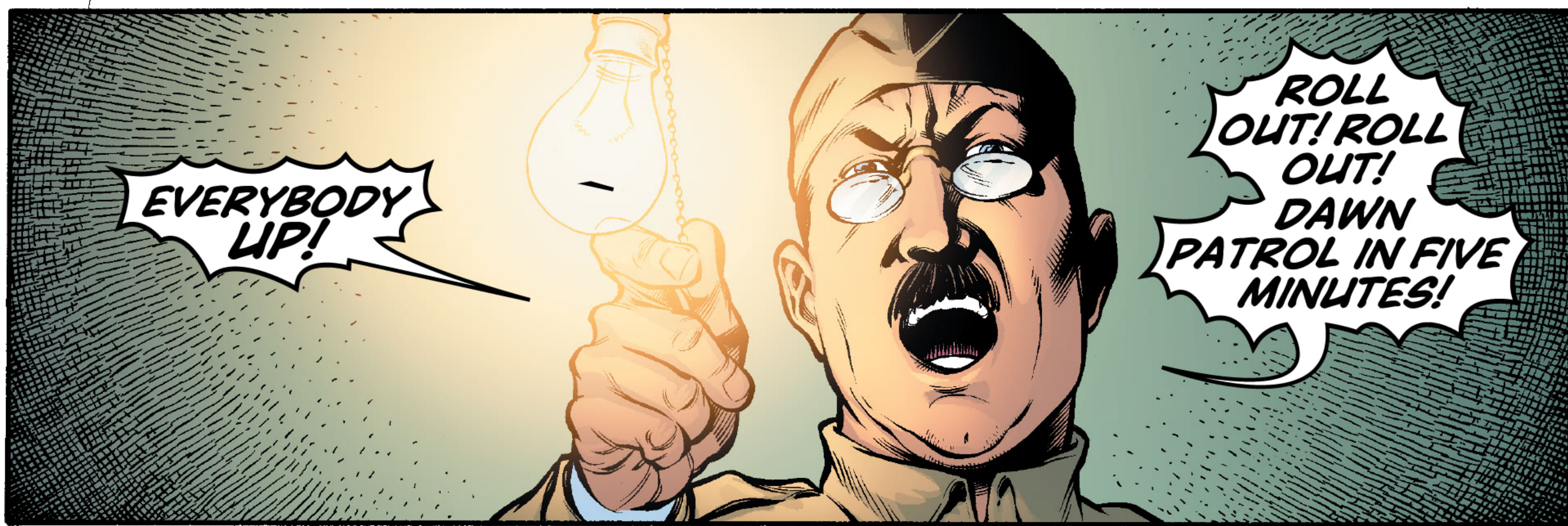
Grace had to catch a train, to ship
her ambulance to Paris, and from
there to the front. I told you about
her, you'd like her too.

It's a shame she couldn't stay.
They're having a kind of party for
us — dinner, dancing, and I bet
there'll be some speeches —

WRITE ME,
CARE OF THE V.A.S. —
IT'LL FIND ME,
EVENTUALLY!

HAVE
A SAFE
TRIP!

— and then we fly to Beauvais, where
we'll be split up, and sent to our permanent
assignments. That's when the job really starts!



EVERYBODY
UP!

ROLL
OUT! ROLL
OUT!
DAWN
PATROL IN FIVE
MINUTES!



NNH...
WHAT TIME
IS...

WAIT...
PATROL? BEFORE
BREAKFAST?

YOU EAT WHEN
YOU GET BACK!
THIS IS DAWN
PATROL!

DAWN
PATROL!

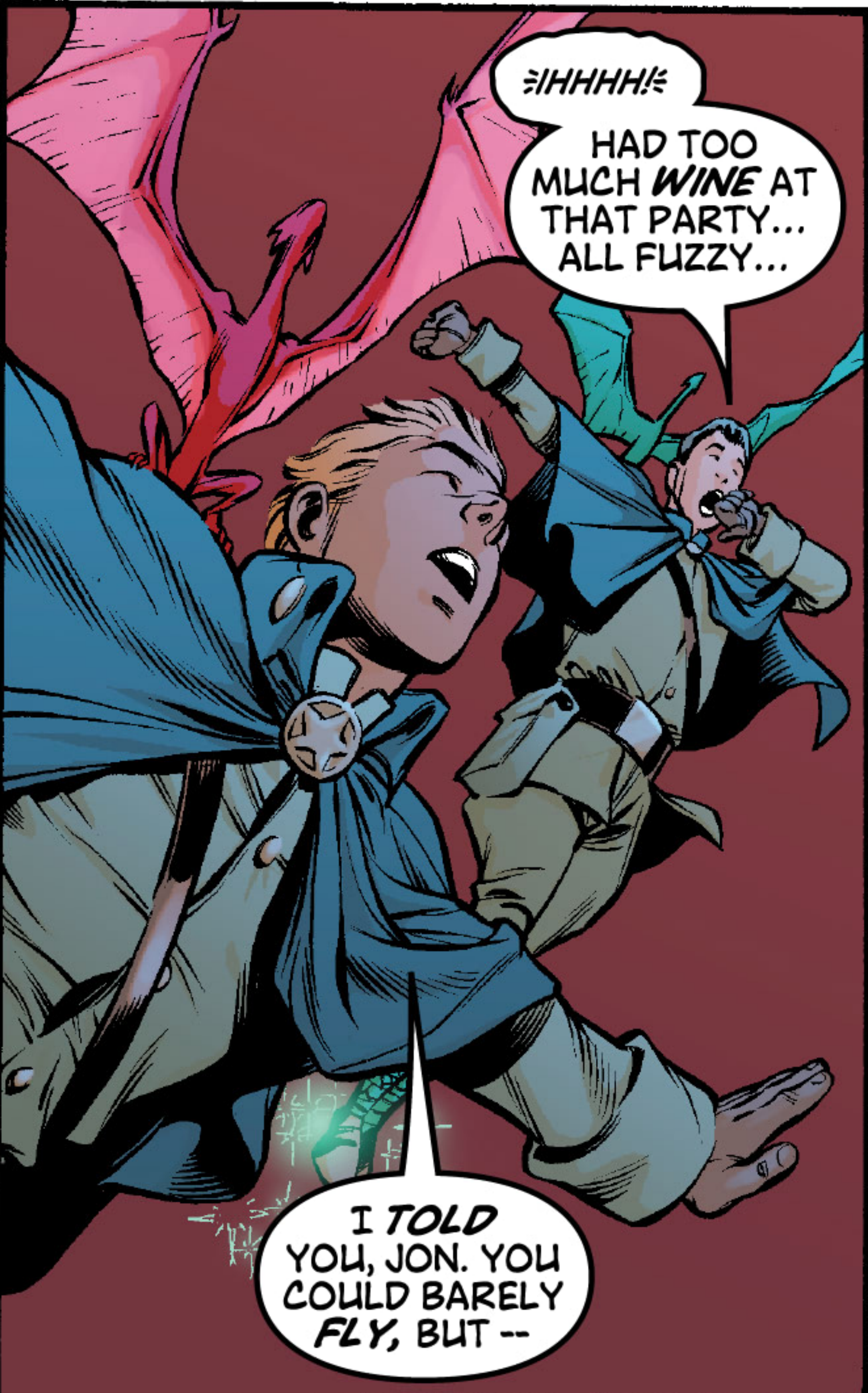
'KAY...
OKAY...



STAY
ALERT!

AND ROLL
OUT FASTER
NEXT TIME!

IT ISN'T
CALLED DAWN
PATROL FOR FUN!



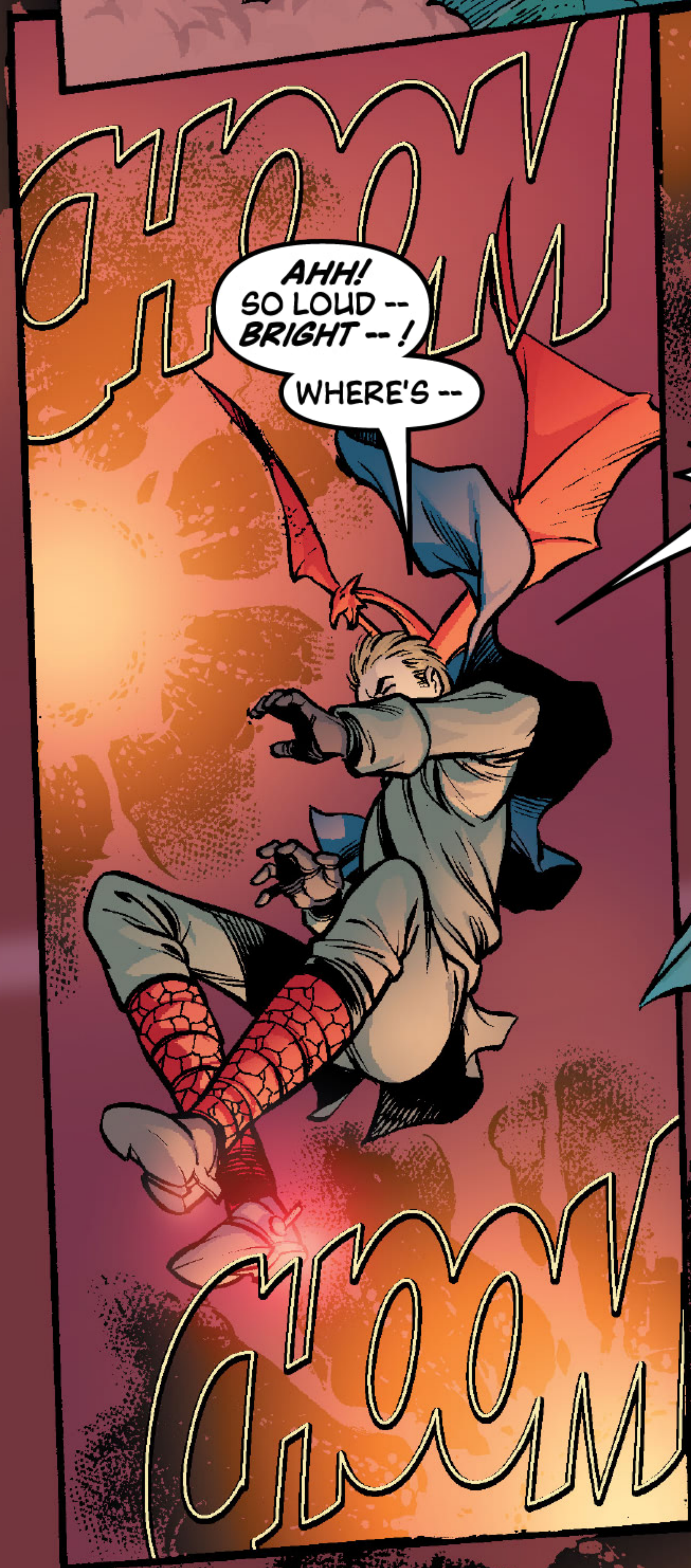
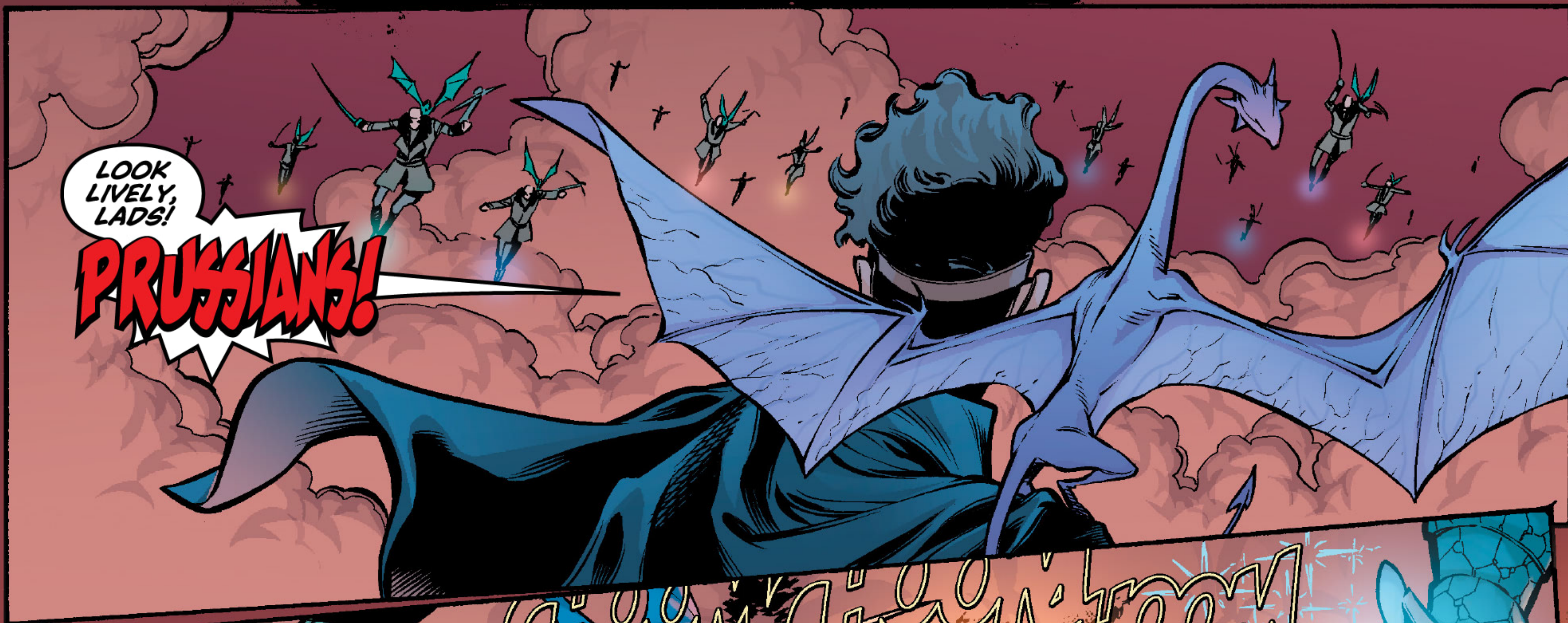
≡IHIII≡
HAD TOO
MUCH WINE AT
THAT PARTY...
ALL FUZZY...

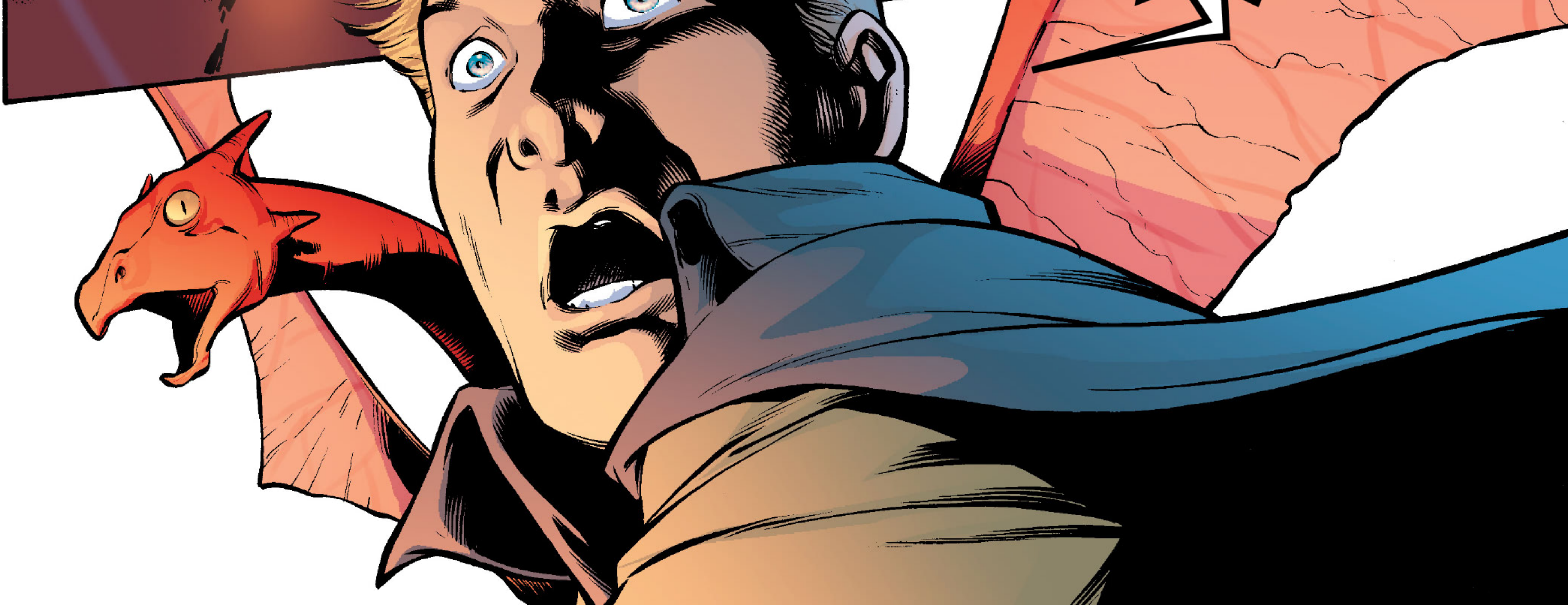
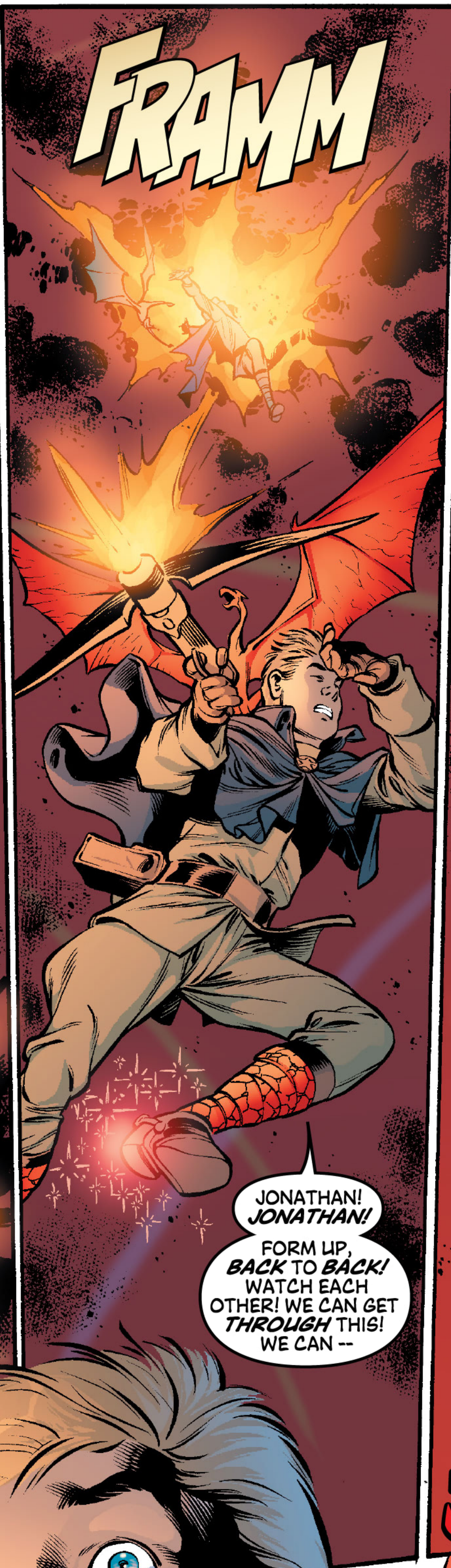
I TOLD
YOU, JON. YOU
COULD BARELY
FLY, BUT --



HUH?

WHAT?
WHERE'S
EVERYONE
G --







CHAPTER FOUR

*La Vie en
Escadrille*

Near Soissons, Gallia.
August 1915

Dear Mom,

I don't know if
you've been told.
Jonathan is dead.

One minute he was behind me,
and the next he was gone, falling.
He was hit by an incendiary bolt.

And Mitch. I told you about him.
His throat was cut. He managed to get
a preservation spell cast, and it might
have done some good, but he'd tumbled
into gun range by then and before he
recovered, he'd been blown to

It was our first patrol.
Just the night before, we'd been

I can't send this.
I can't send this.

God, I can't
even write this.

Dear Mom,

How are you? I'm all right.
I guess the O.A.C. has let the
Kerrys know about Jonathan's
death by now.

I will write to them myself soon,
but in the meantime please let them
know how sorry I am. He died
fighting for freedom, and all the
way to the end he was

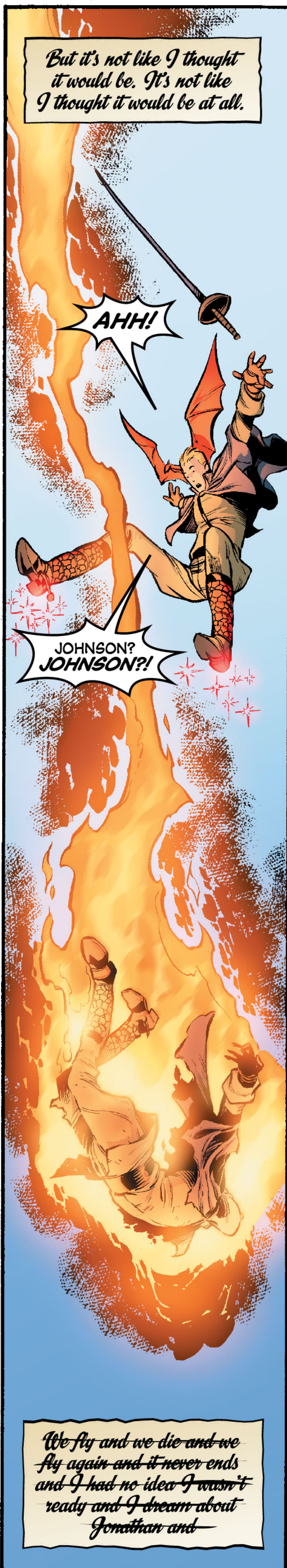
Don't worry, I'm being careful
and getting enough to eat. Sometimes
it's very quiet over here, believe
it or not. Sometimes, of course —



— it's not.

AAAAA

We're doing something worthwhile, though. Something that matters.

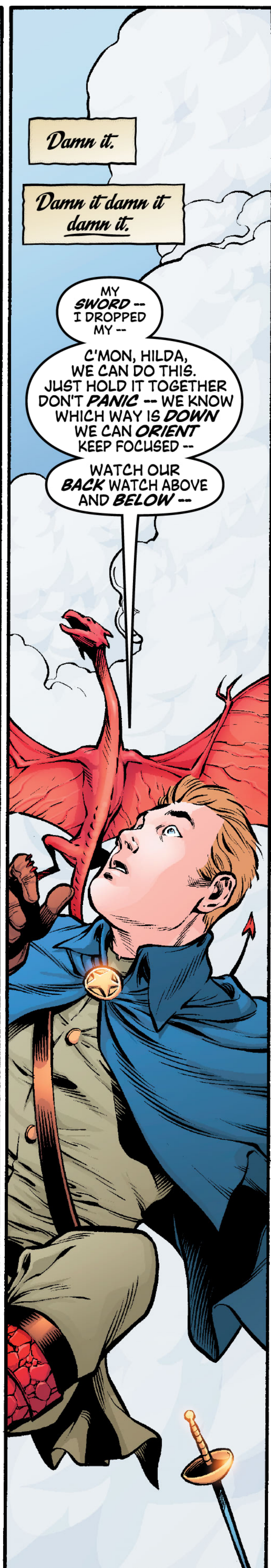


But it's not like I thought it would be. It's not like I thought it would be at all.

AHH!

JOHNSON?
JOHNSON?!

We fly and we die and we fly again and it never ends and I had no idea I wasn't ready and I dream about Jonathan and



Damn it.

Damn it damn it damn it.

MY SWORD -- I DROPPED MY --
C'MON, HILDA, WE CAN DO THIS. JUST HOLD IT TOGETHER. DON'T PANIC -- WE KNOW WHICH WAY IS DOWN WE CAN ORIENT KEEP FOCUSED --
WATCH OUR BACK WATCH ABOVE AND BELOW --

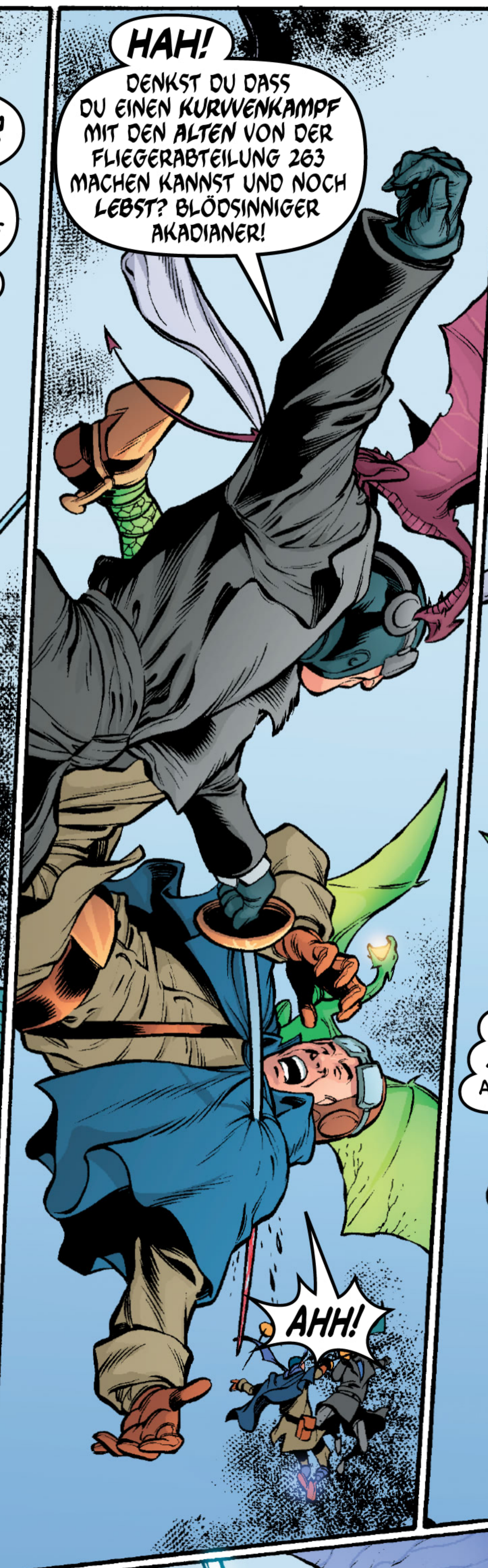


EYES LOOSE,
EVERYONE! STAY
ALERT!

GOODHEART,
BARRON -- THERE'S A
HOLE LEEWARD AND
ABOVE!

EDWARDS,
BEHIND AND
BELOW -- FIVE
O'CLOCK!

DAVIS --



HAH!

DENKST DU DASS
DU EINEN KURVVENKAMPF
MIT DEN ALTEN VON DER
FLIEGERABTEILUNG 263
MACHEN KANNST UND NOCH
LEBST? BLÖDSINNIGER
AKADIANER!

AHH!



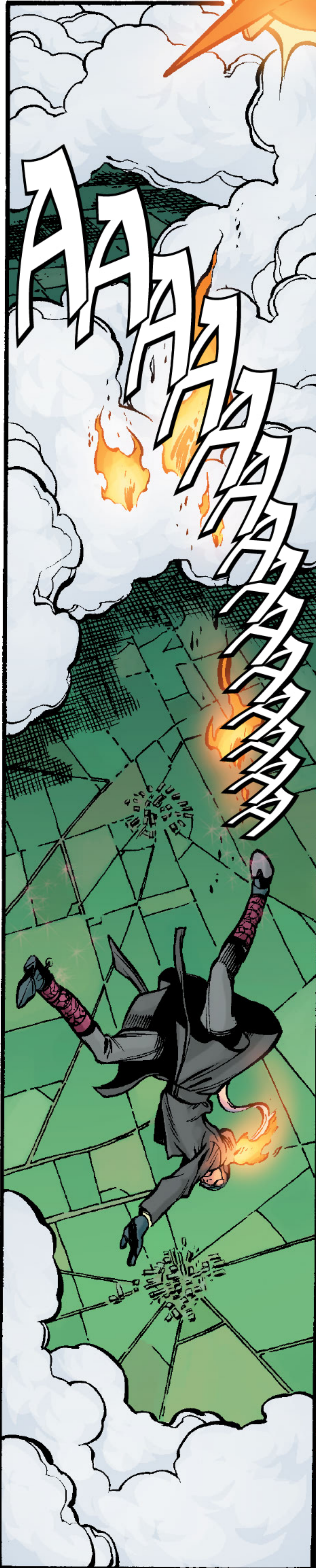
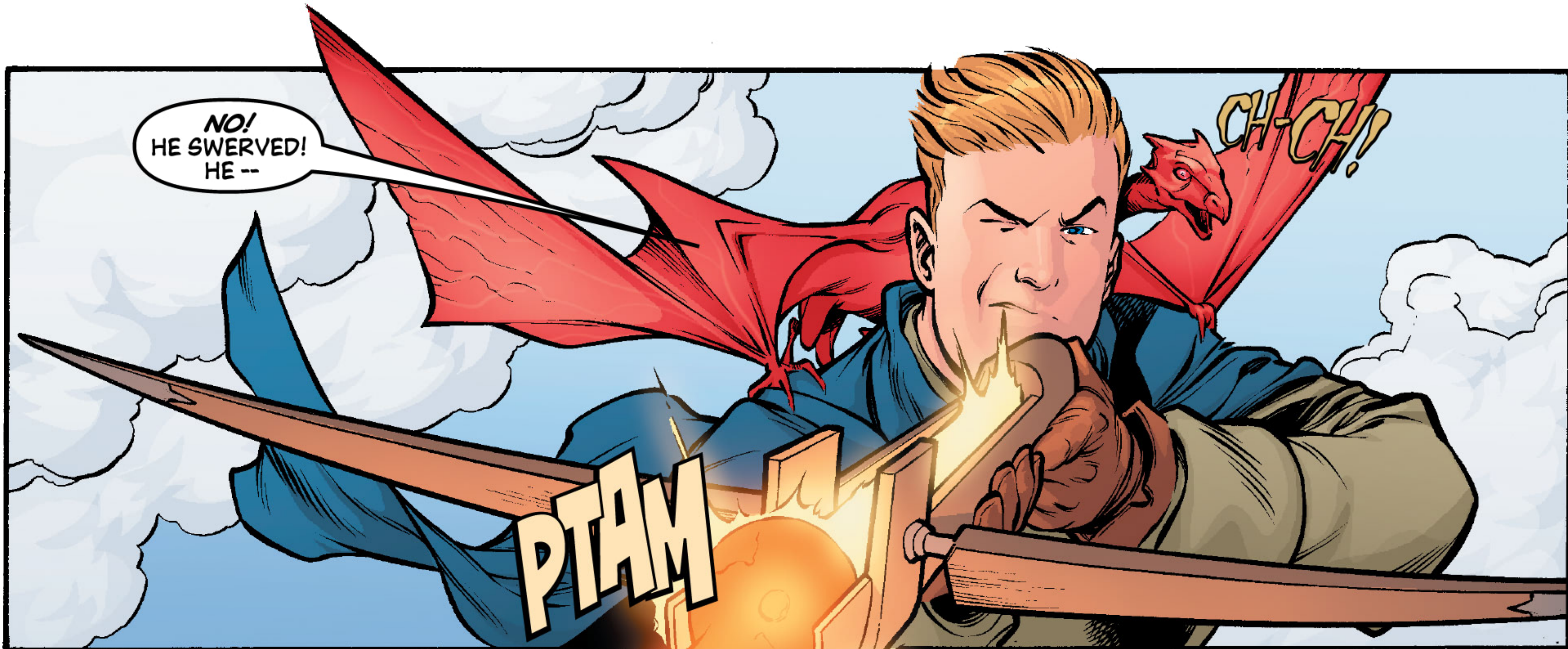
UND JETZT,
NARR SCHLAG'
ICH KRÖGERS
REKORD--

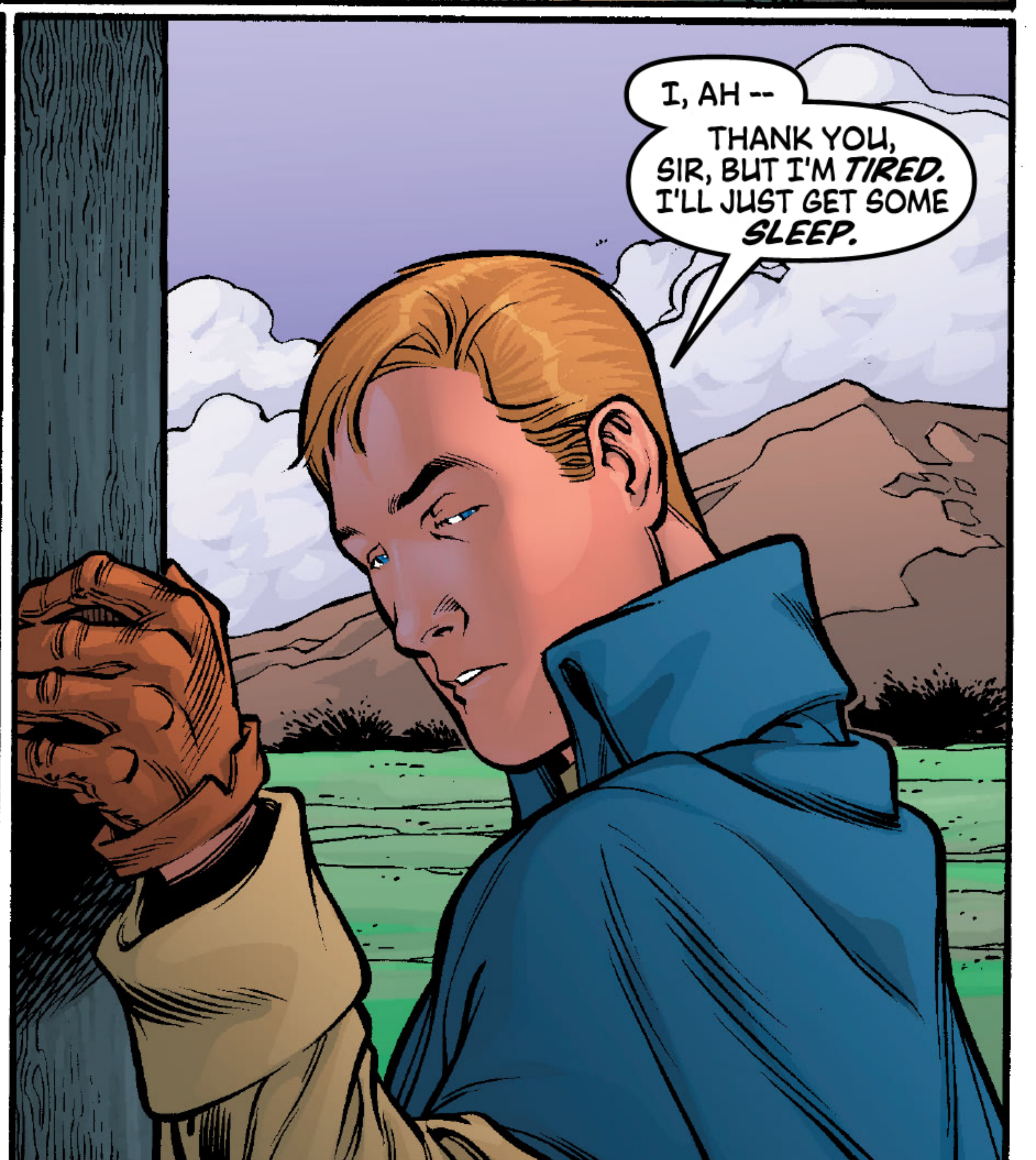
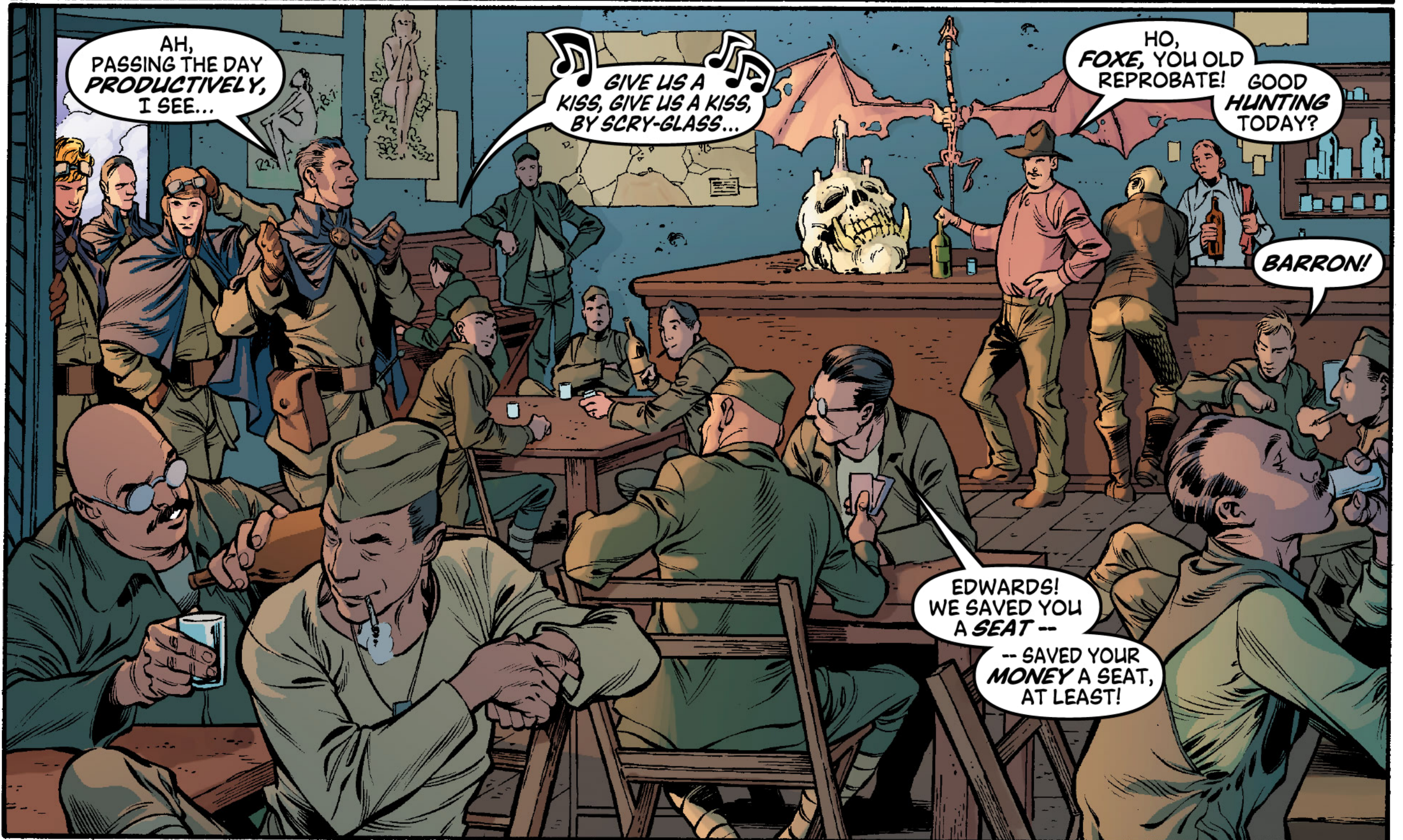
AH!
AH!
AH!

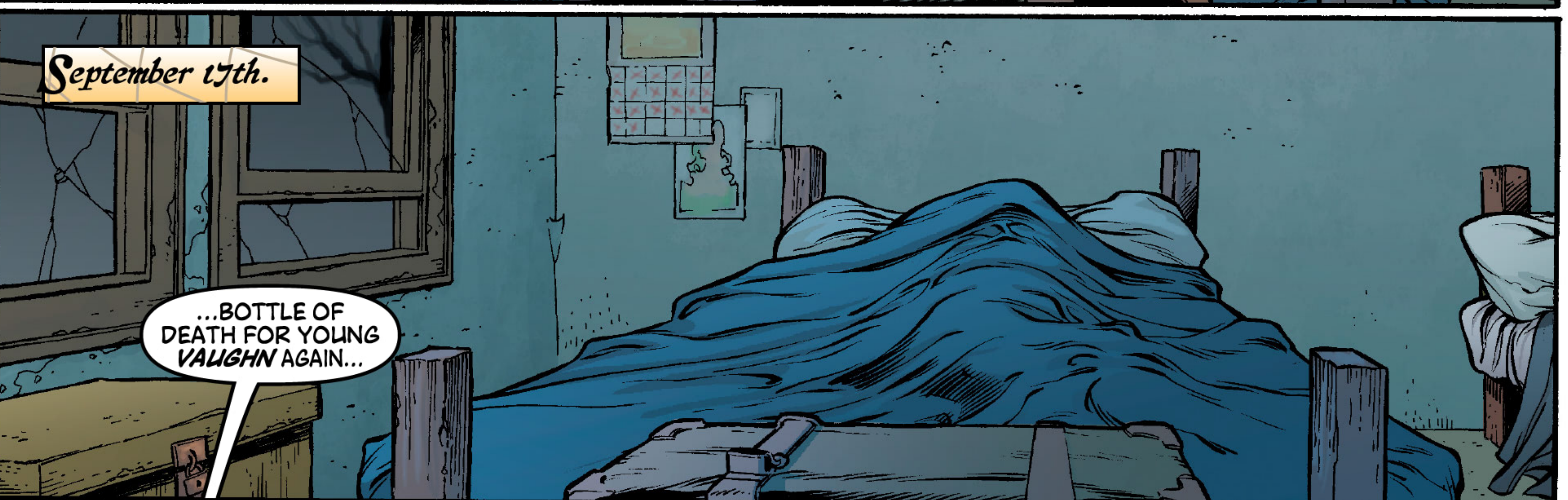
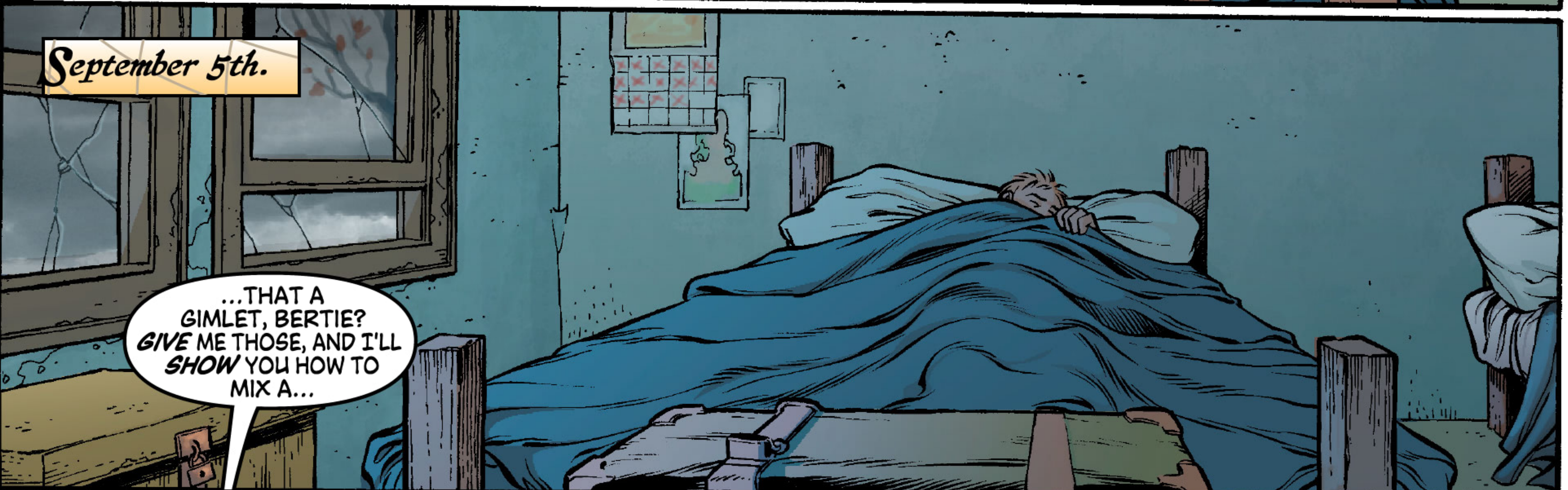
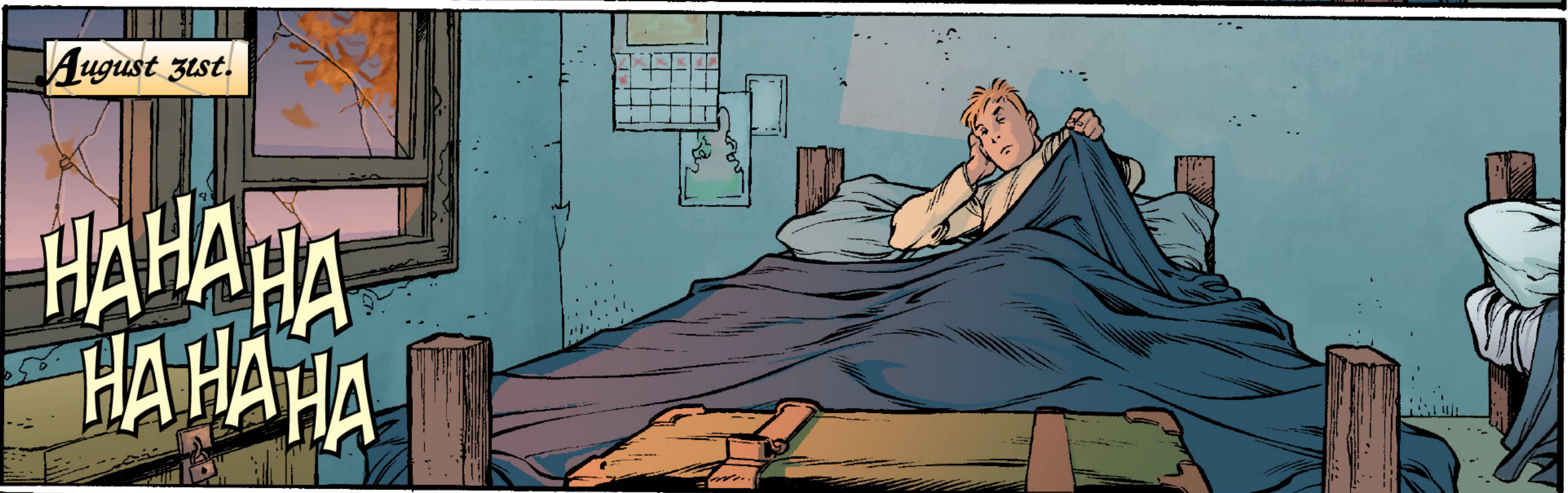
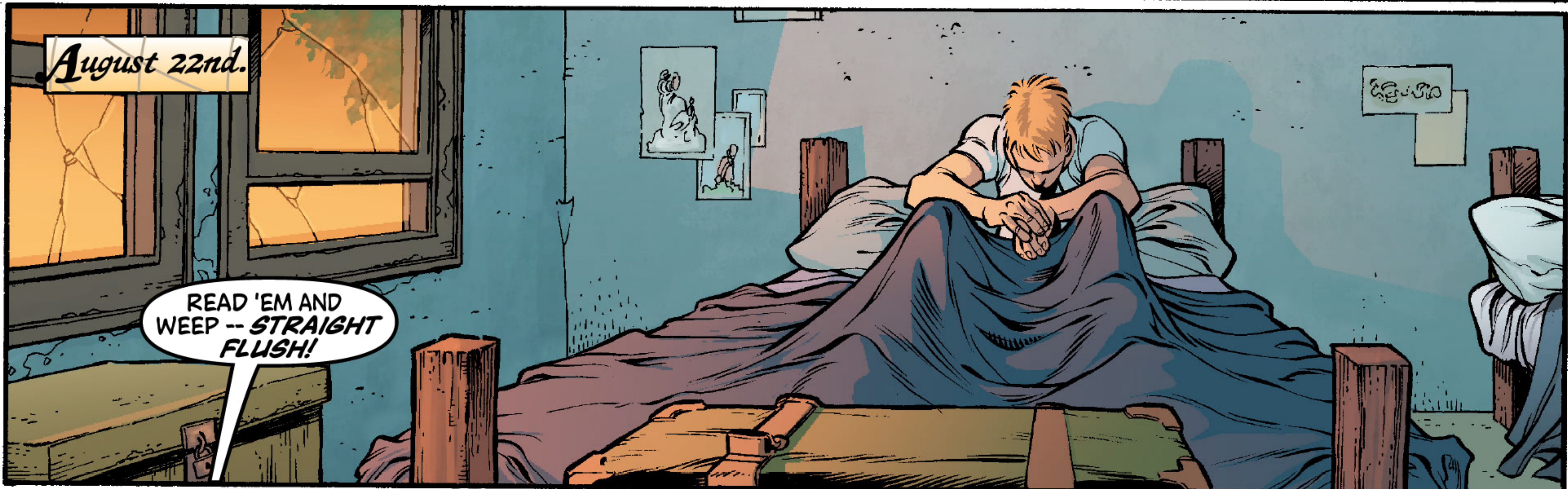
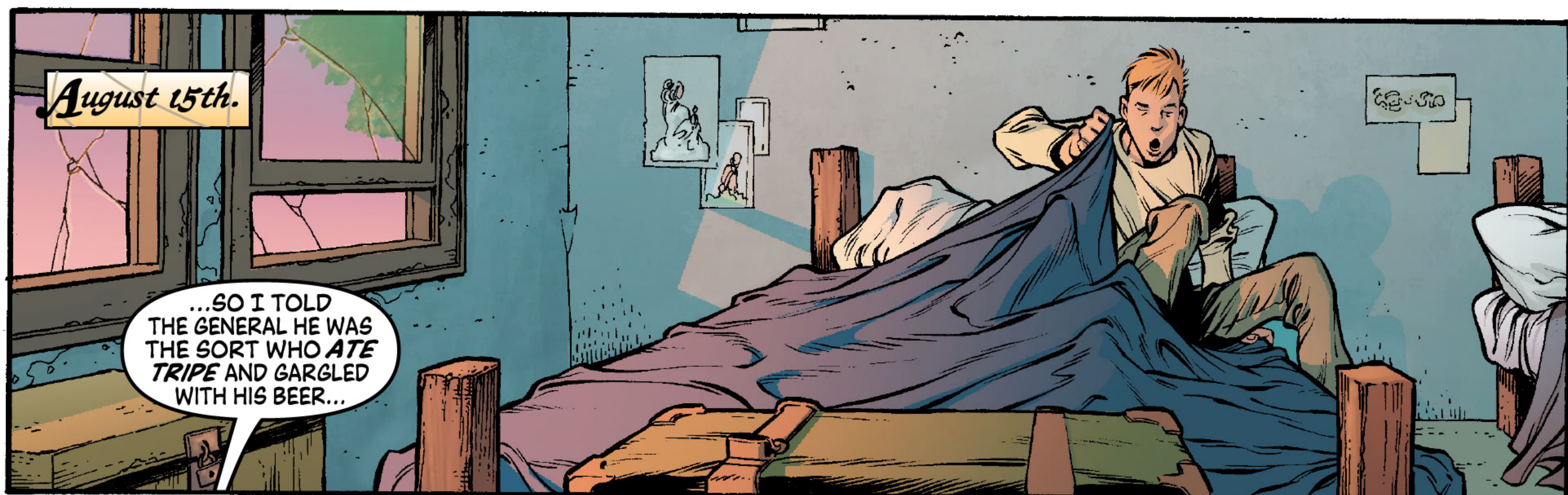


ARROWSMITH!
HELP
DAVIS -- YOU'RE
CLOSEST!

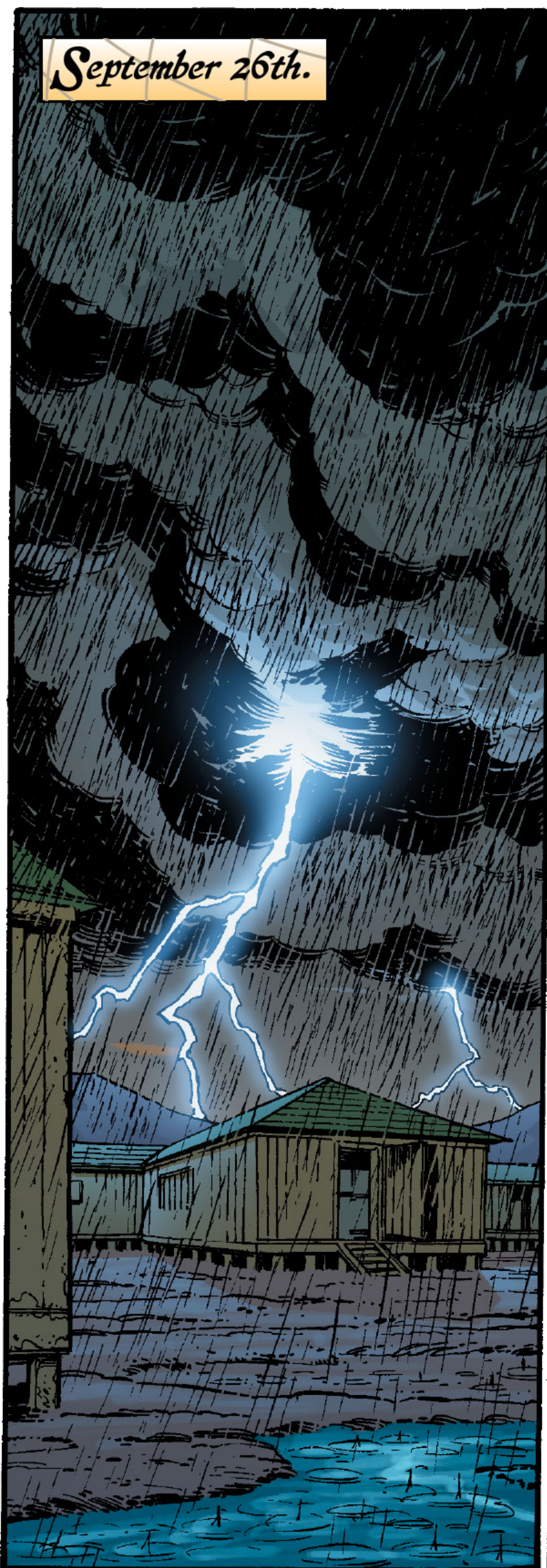
Y-YESSIR!
I
GOT HIM, I
GOT --







September 26th.



ISN'T IT JUST A GLORIOUS DAY?♪
OH YES, IT LOOKS LIKE RAIN!
ONLY A SHOWER THAT PASSES AWAY...
...AND THEN COMES ON AGAIN!
♪



-- AND SO I
COME OUT OF THE
CLOUD AND THERE HE
IS, FAT AND SLOW
AND STUPID --

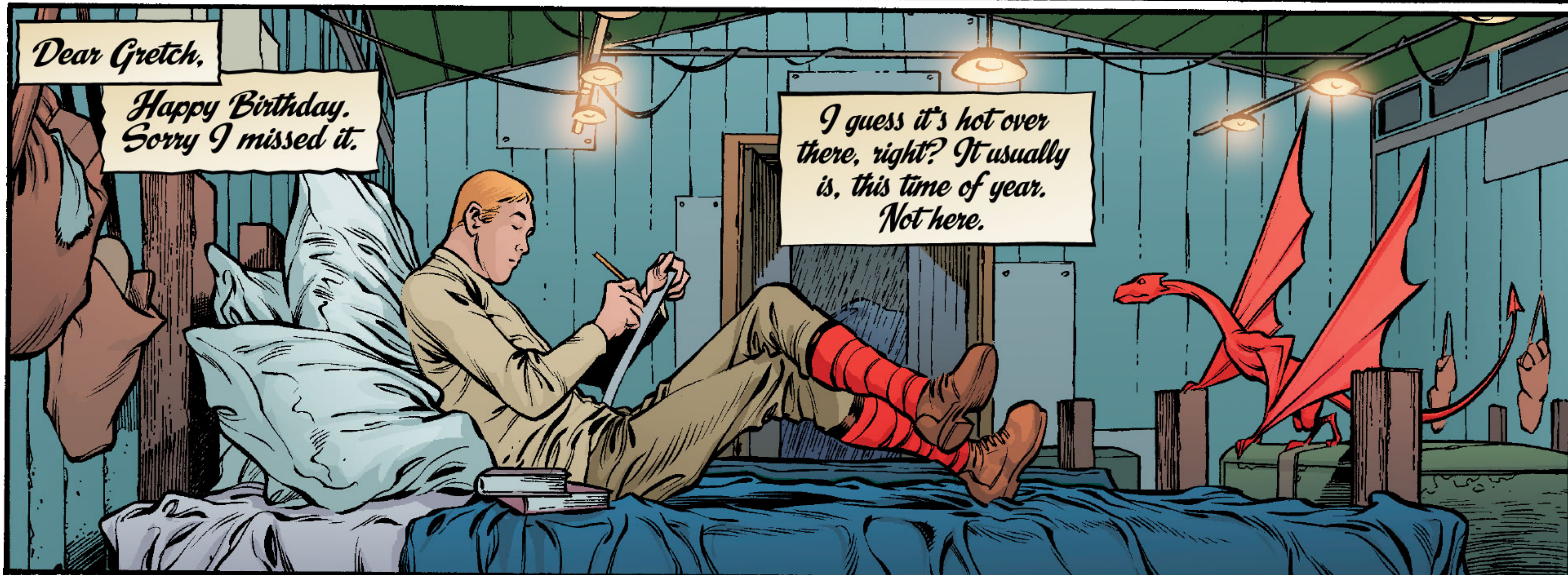
HNH

I THOUGHT
YOU SAID YOU COULD
PLAY POKER...

Dear Gretch,

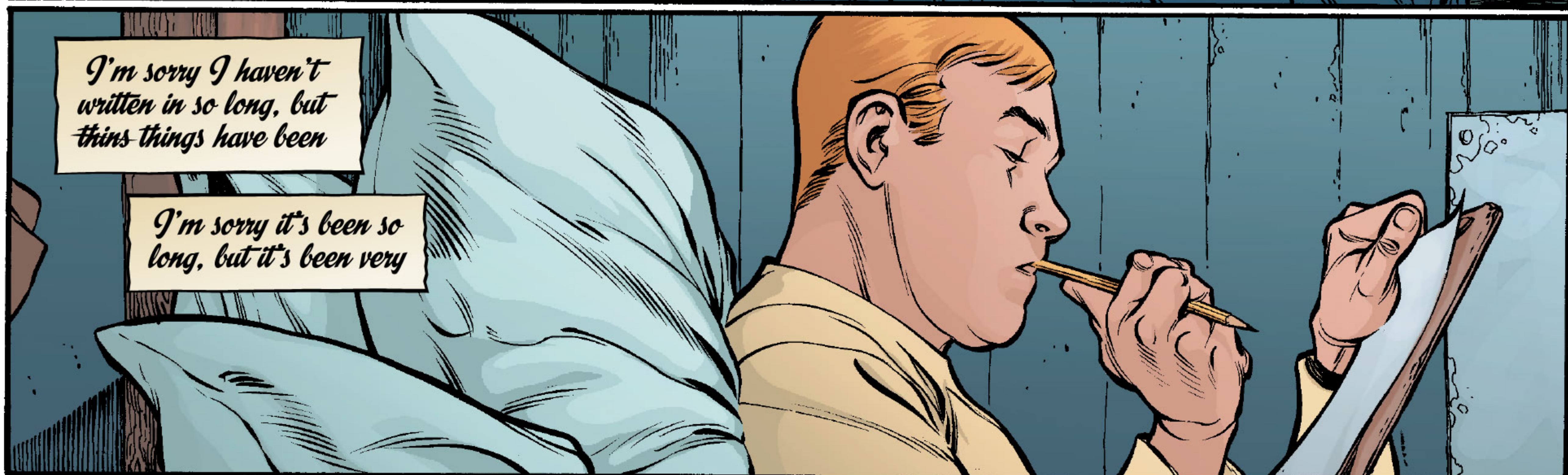
Happy Birthday.
Sorry I missed it.

I guess it's hot over
there, right? It usually
is, this time of year.
Not here.



I'm sorry I haven't
written in so long, but
things have been

I'm sorry it's been so
long, but it's been very





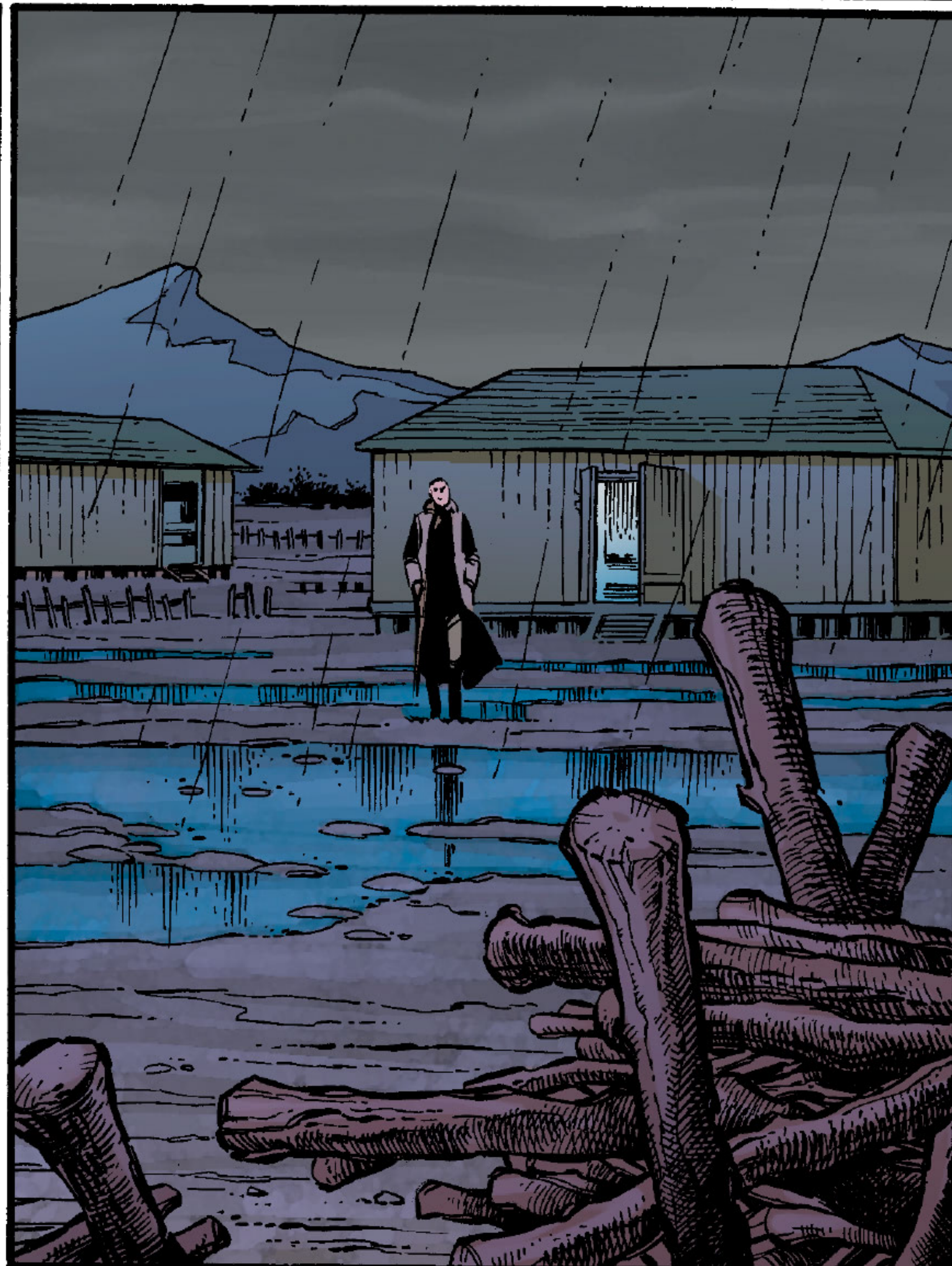
NNH!
HILDA!



AT LEAST
SOMEONE'S
HAVING FUN.

CH!

STAY WARM.
I'M JUST GOING
TO STRETCH MY
LEGS.



ARROWSMITH.

YOU'VE BEEN
FLYING *VERY* WELL,
SON. BETTER AND BETTER
WITH EVERY MISSION. ONE
OF OUR *STEADIEST*
MEN OF LATE.

YOU'LL
MAKE *ACE* SOON,
I WARRANT.

I, AH,
THANK YOU,
CAPTAIN FOXE. IT'S...
VERY NICE OF YOU
TO SAY SO.

I WAS
NERVOUS, AT
FIRST, BUT I'VE
BEEN TRYING --



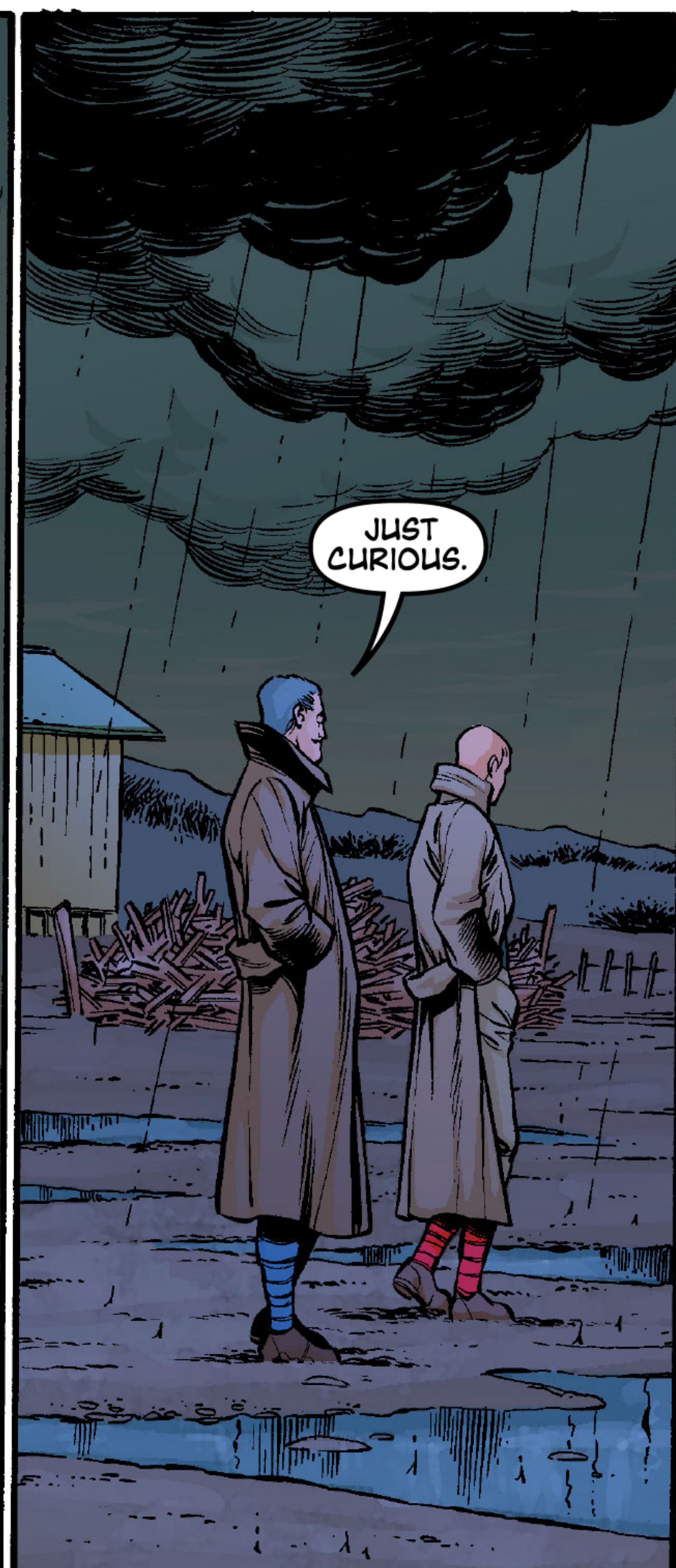
-- AND THE ESCADRILLE'S FULL OF **GOOD PILOTS**. I'VE LEARNED A LOT.

YOU'VE DONE MORE THAN THAT -- **FLETCHER**, ISN'T IT? WHEN YOU FIRST ARRIVED, I DOUBTED YOU'D LAST A **WEEK**. BUT NOW...



TELL ME, FLETCHER. YOU NEVER JOIN THE MEN FOR A DRINK OR A **CARD GAME** IN THE DAYROOM. YOU NEVER GO TO THE **VILLAGE**...

IS THAT... AM I DOING SOMETHING **WRONG**, SIR?



JUST CURIOUS.



I **THINK** ABOUT IT. BUT -- I CAME HERE WITH A **FRIEND**, A BOY I GREW UP WITH. WE **JOINED UP** TOGETHER.

HE'S **DEAD**, SIR. HE DIED THE FIRST DAY.

AND IT SEEMS -- I DON'T KNOW, **WRONG** SOMEHOW -- **DISRESPECTFUL** --



YOUR **FRIEND** MAY BE DEAD, FLETCHER. BUT YOU? YOU'RE **ALIVE**, EVEN IF IT DOESN'T MUCH **FEEL** LIKE IT.

IT WON'T DO **HIM** -- OR ANYONE -- ANY GOOD IF YOU ACT LIKE **YOU'RE** DEAD, TOO. IT WON'T BRING ANYONE **BACK**, WON'T EASE YOUR **PAIN**...

IT'LL JUST **WEAR** AT YOU UNTIL YOU MAKE A MISTAKE IN FLIGHT. OR WORSE, IN **COMBAT**.



LISTEN TO ME, ARROWSMITH.

YOU'RE YOUNG, YOU'RE **ALIVE** -- YOU NEED TO LET OFF **STEAM**, ACT **FOOLISH** -- IF ONLY TO REMIND YOURSELF WHICH SIDE OF THE GRAVE YOU'RE **ON**.

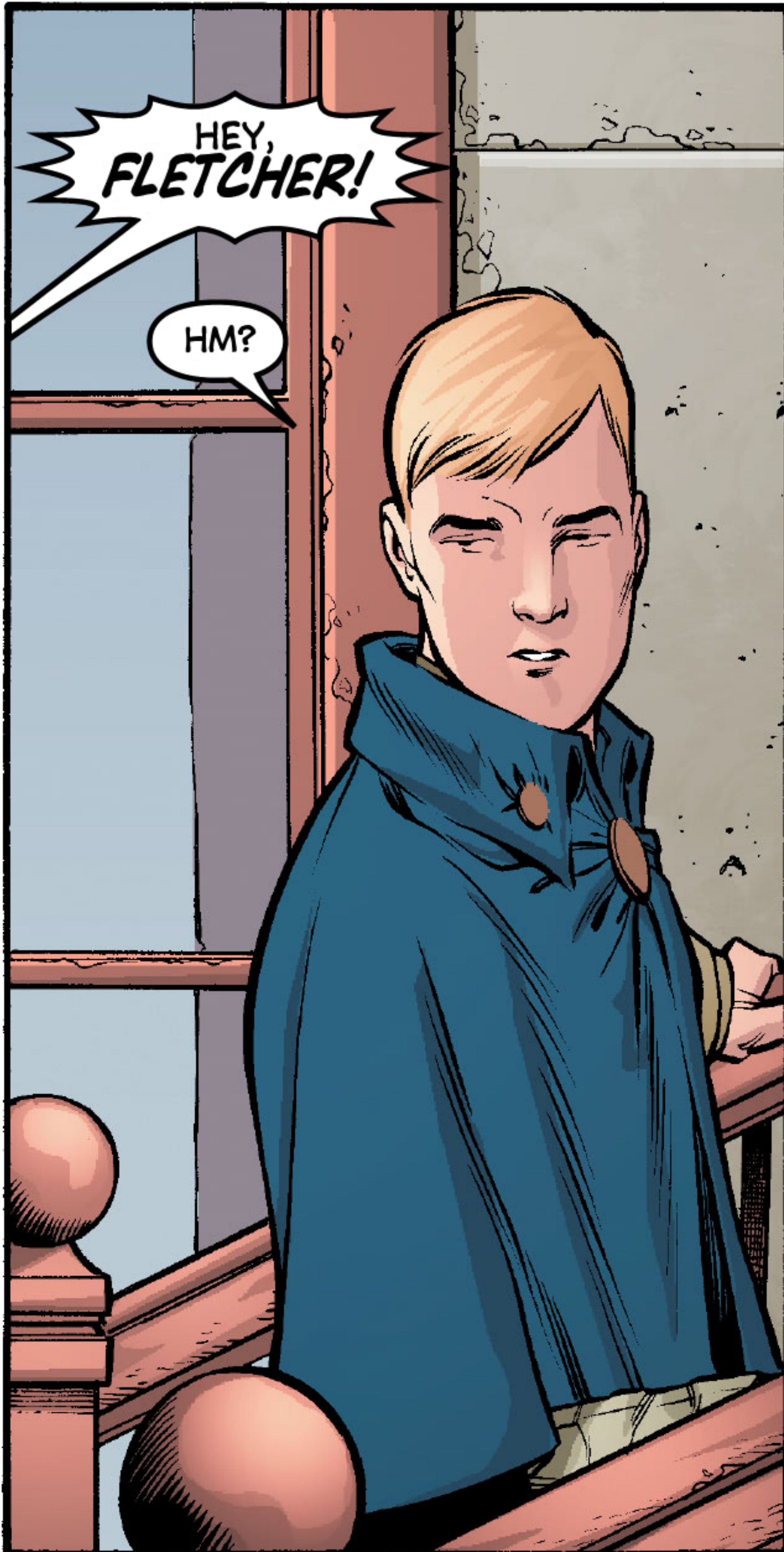
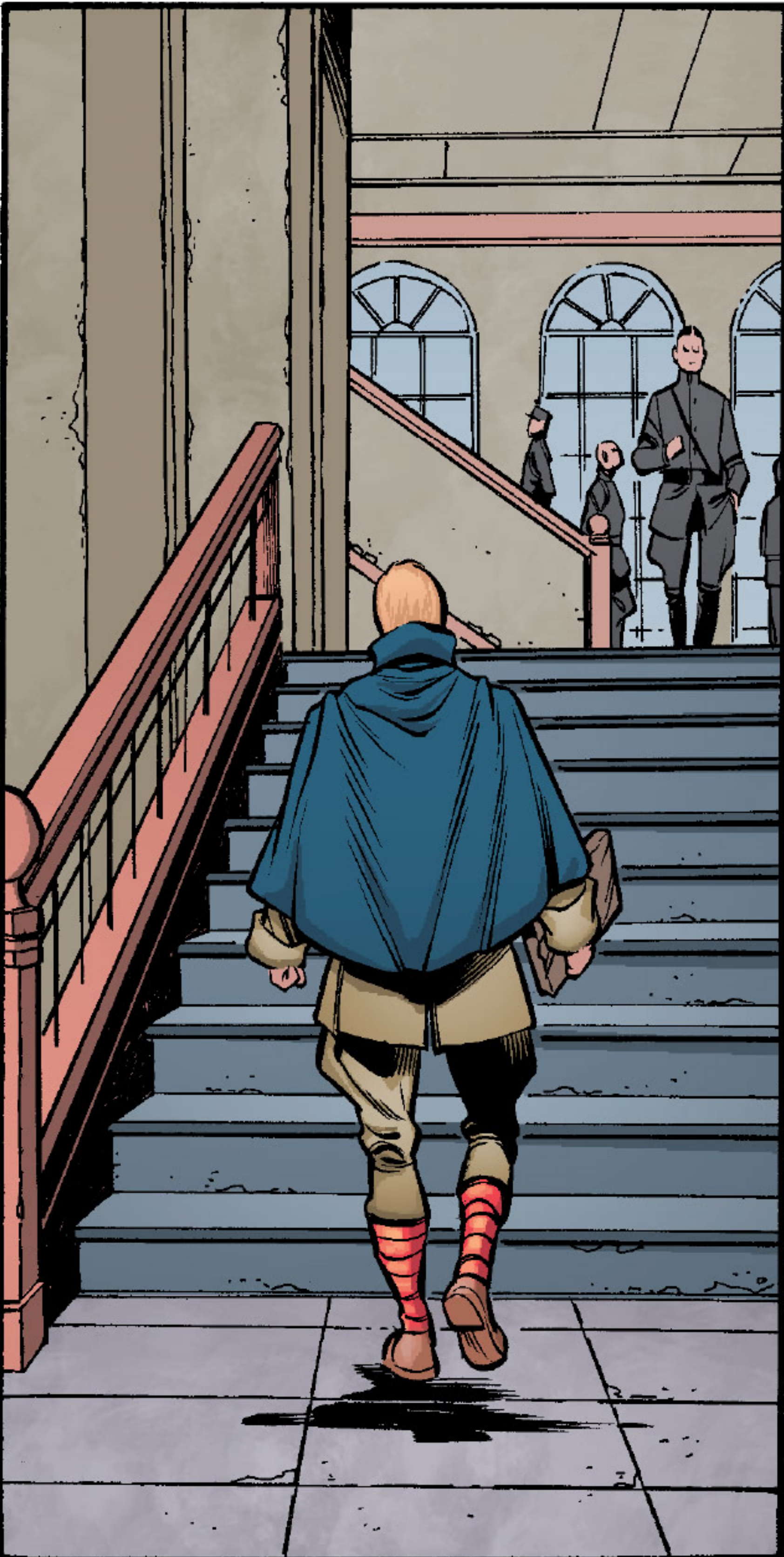
AFTER ALL, WE MAY ALL BE ON THE **OTHER** SOON ENOUGH.

THE RAIN SHOULD END BY **AFTERNOON**. SOME OF US ARE HEADED INTO THE VILLAGE. **JOIN** US. HAVE A **DRINK**, LOOK AT A **GIRL**. YOU'LL **FEEL** BETTER.



WELL.
THERE IS
ONE THING I NEED
TO DO...







-- AND I'VE BEEN STATIONED HERE **EVER SINCE!**

AND THEY MAKE YOU **DRESS** LIKE THAT?

BELIEVE ME, WHEN I'M OUT IN THE **AMBULANCE**, THERE ARE **DUNGAREES** UNDER THIS THING.

WE SHOULD GO GET --

A DRINK? **SOLD**. BUT BEFORE THAT --

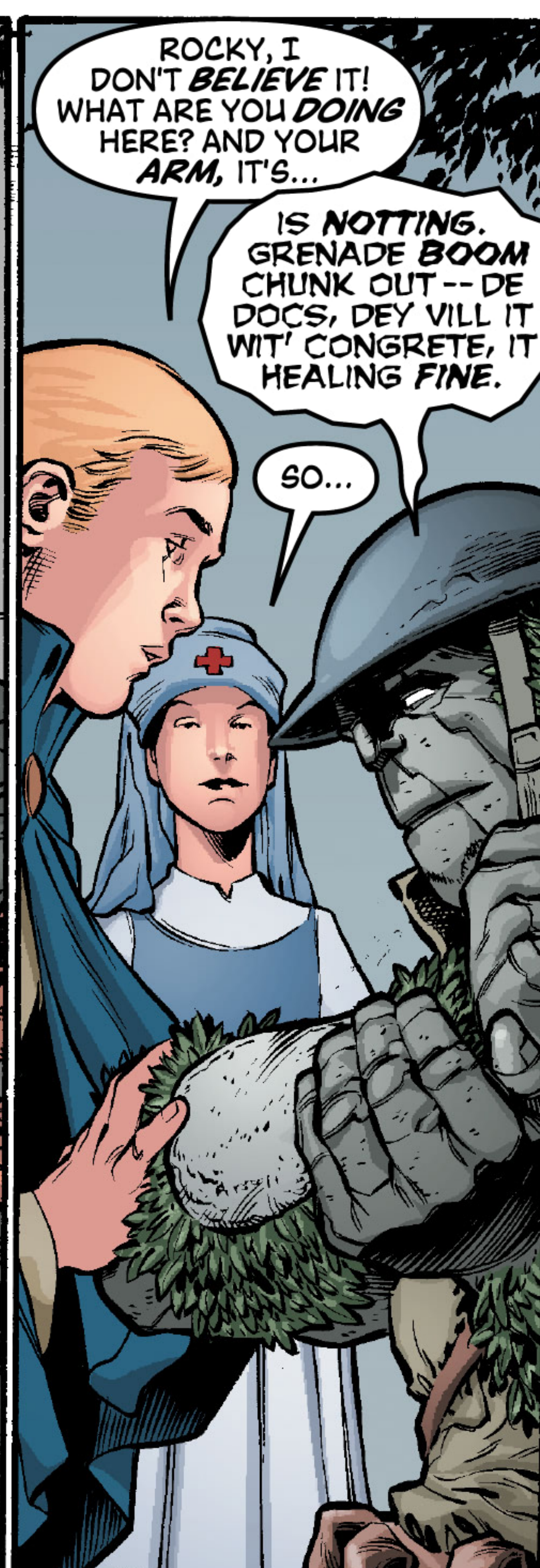


-- THERE'S **SOMEONE ELSE** I RAN INTO. I THINK YOU MIGHT **KNOW** HIM...

HUH?

ROCKY!

VLECH-BOY!



ROCKY, I DON'T **BELIEVE** IT! WHAT ARE YOU **DOING** HERE? AND YOUR **ARM**, IT'S...

IS **NOTHING**. GRENADE **BOOM** CHUNK OUT -- DE **DOCS**, DEY VILL IT WIT' **CONCRETE**, IT HEALING **FINE**.

SO...



"...ABOUT THAT DRINK."

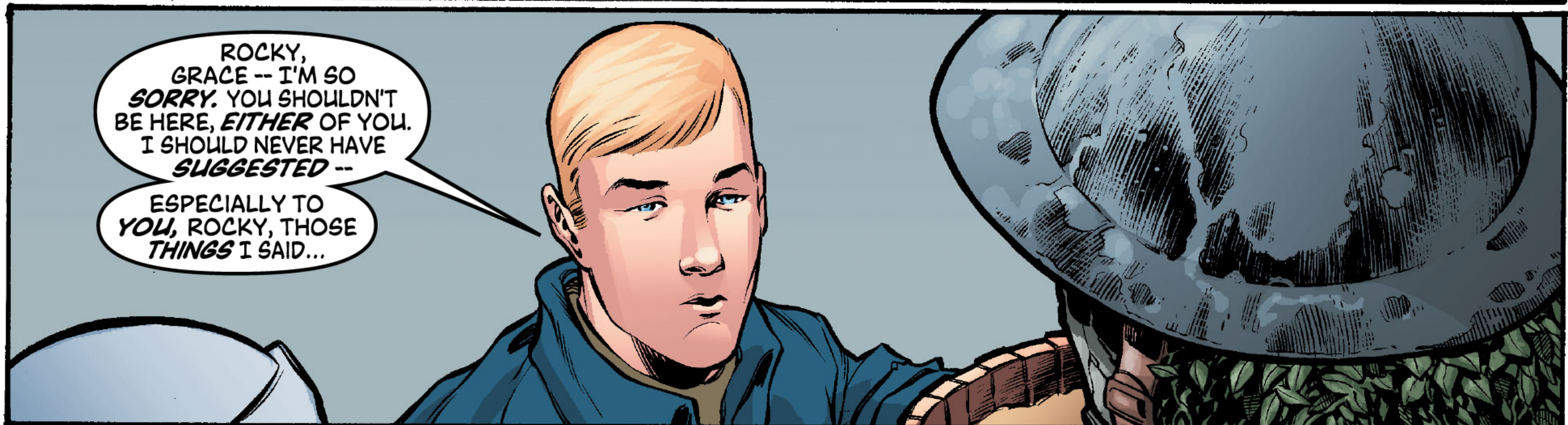
ZOMBIES? FOR **TRUE?**

YES -- I WAS PICKING UP **WOUNDED** NEAR THE FRONT LINES, AND THERE WAS A BREAKTHROUGH. THE **PRUSSIANS** SET OFF A **ZOMBIE SPELL**, THE **DEAD ROSE**...

IF THE **AMBULANCE** HADN'T **OVERTURNED**, I'M SURE I'D BE DEAD. I WAS UNDERNEATH -- SOMETIMES I CAN STILL HEAR THEM **CLAWING** FOR ME.

BUT AT LEAST THAT **ENDED**. THE **WORST** PART IS GETTING NO SLEEP. AND I'VE ONLY BEEN HERE **TWO MONTHS!** I DON'T KNOW HOW PEOPLE **STAND** IT!

ALL I THINK ABOUT, SOMETIMES, IS **HOME**. MY OWN **BED**...



ROCKY, GRACE -- I'M SO **SORRY**. YOU SHOULDN'T BE HERE, **EITHER** OF YOU. I SHOULD NEVER HAVE **SUGGESTED** --

ESPECIALLY TO **YOU**, ROCKY, THOSE **THINGS** I SAID...



NA, NA.
YOU WAS RIGHT,
VLECH. DAT WHY
I JOIN UP.

DESE PEOPLE,
DIS WAR -- DEY
GOT TO BE STOPPED.
T'INGS IS GETTING
VER' BAD.



MY PEOPLE,
DEY SAYING -- DE
OLD GODS, DE GODS
OF DE NORT -- DEY UPSET
'BOUT DIS WAR. IT HURT
DE LAND. HURT DEM.

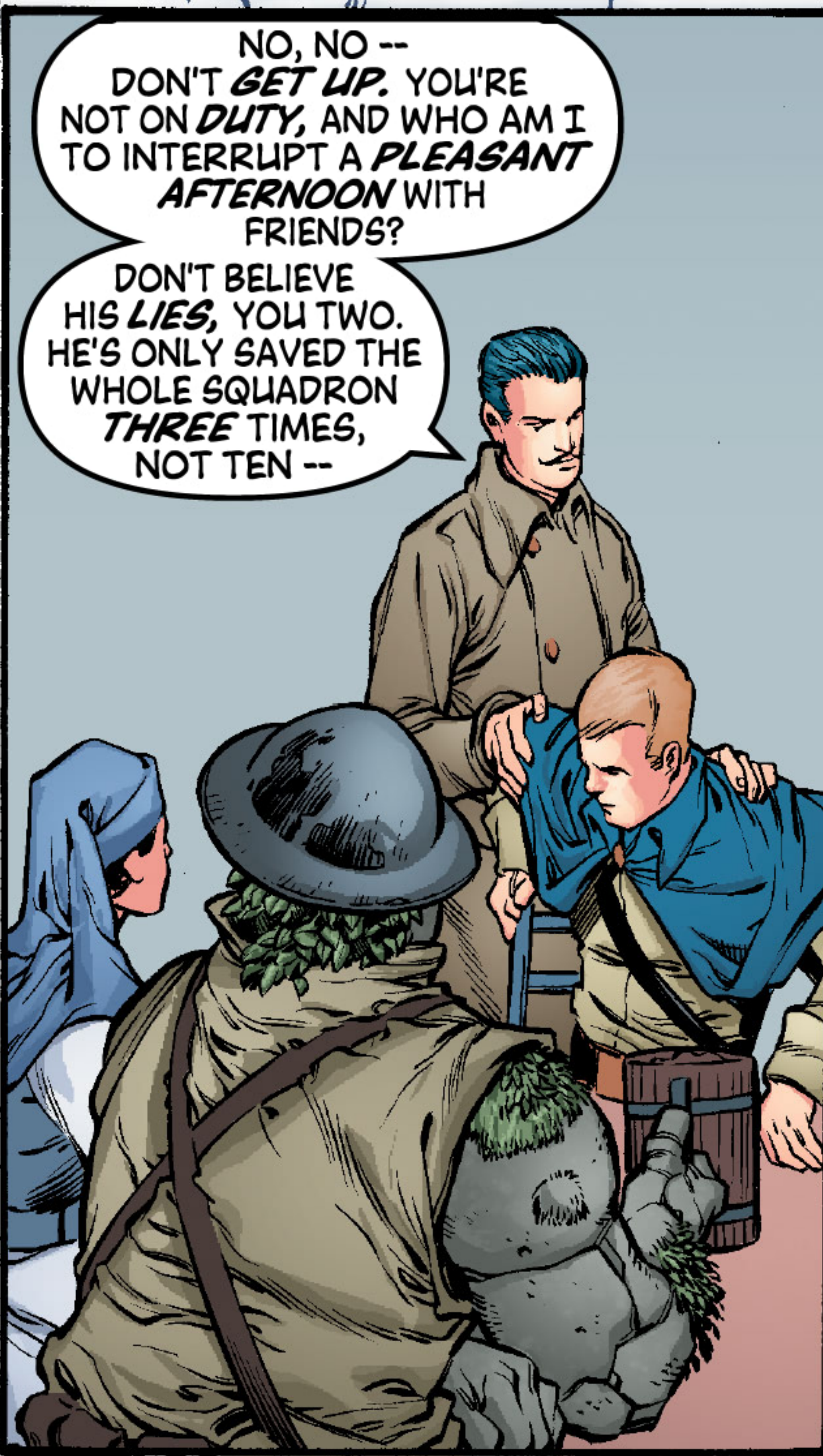
IT GOT
TO BE ENDED --
BEFORE TOO MUCH
HURTING DONE
TO FIX.

THE
GODS...OF THE
NORTH?
HOW
DOES IT...?



SAY,
ARROWSMITH!
GOOD TO SEE YOU
OUT AND ABOUT,
SON!

CAPTAIN
FOX!
GRACE,
ROCKY, THIS
IS --



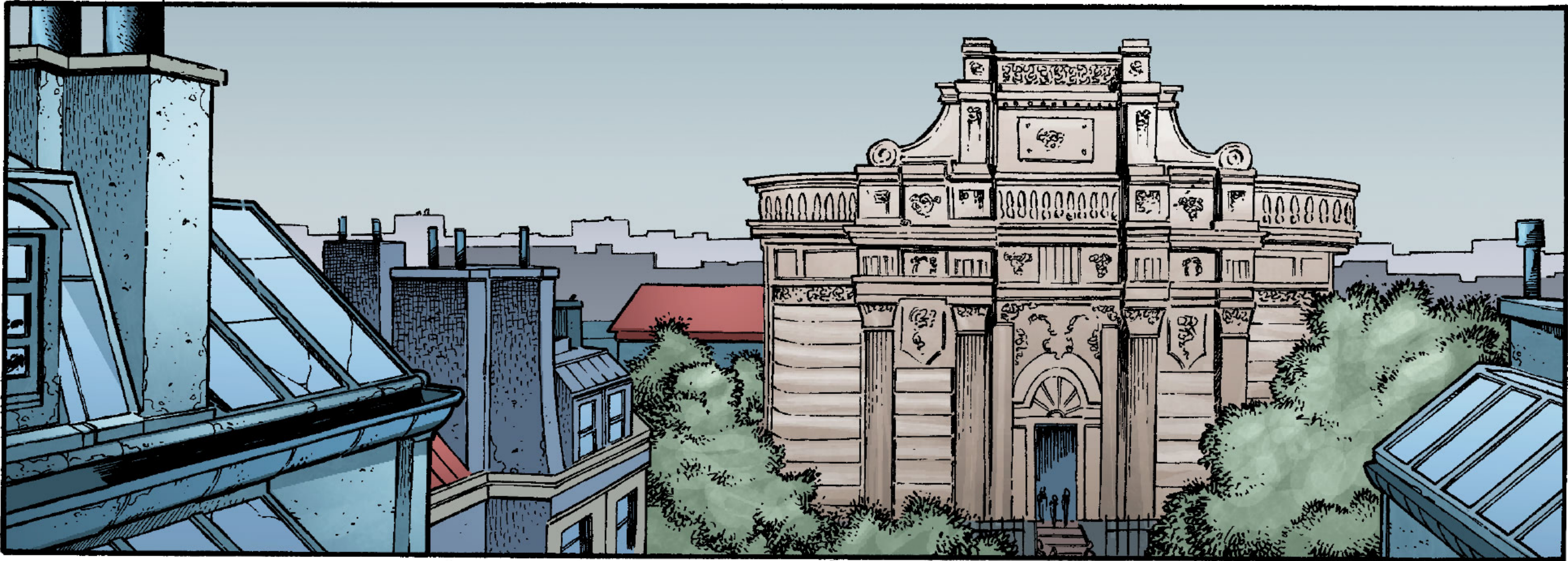
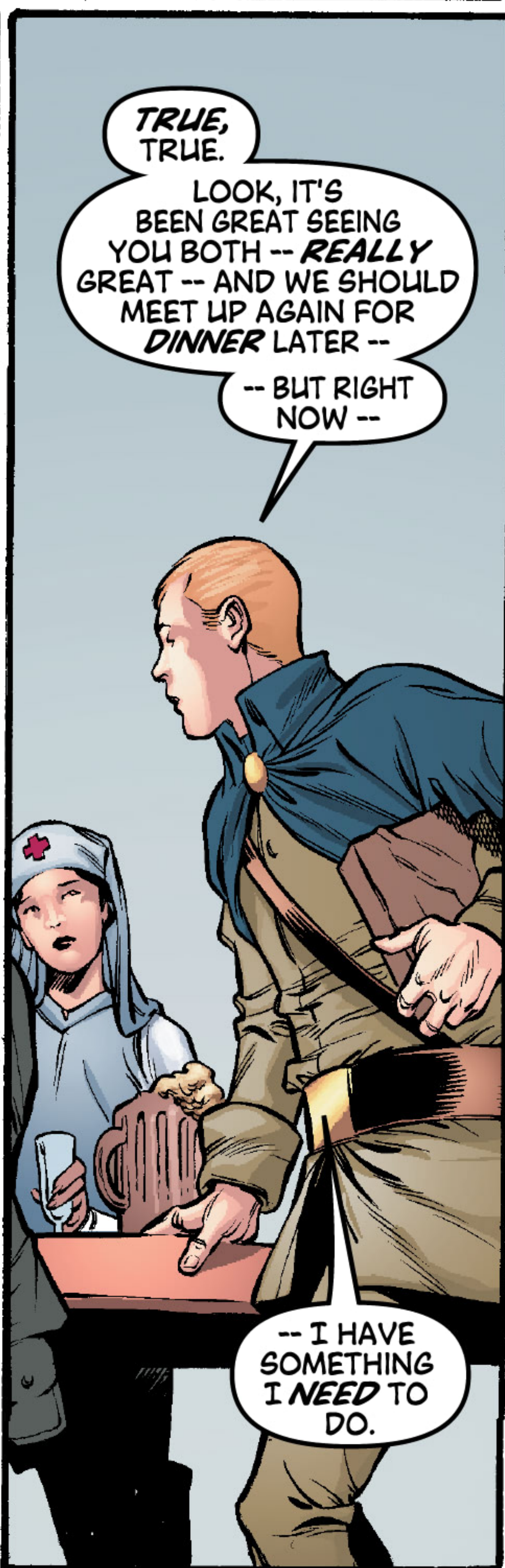
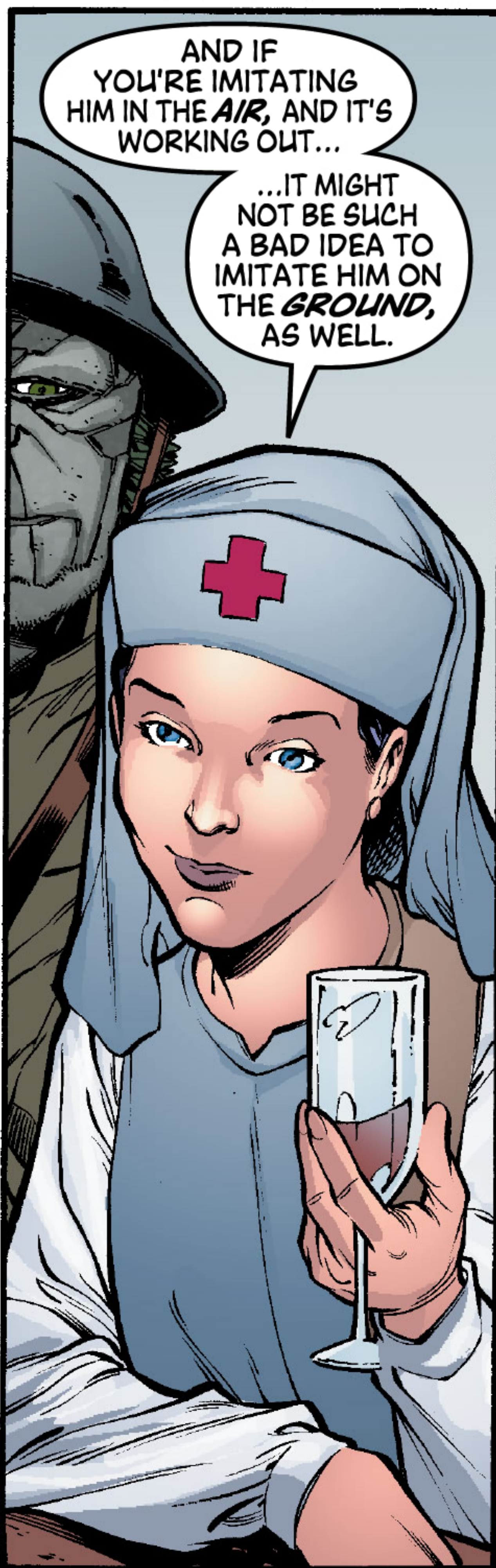
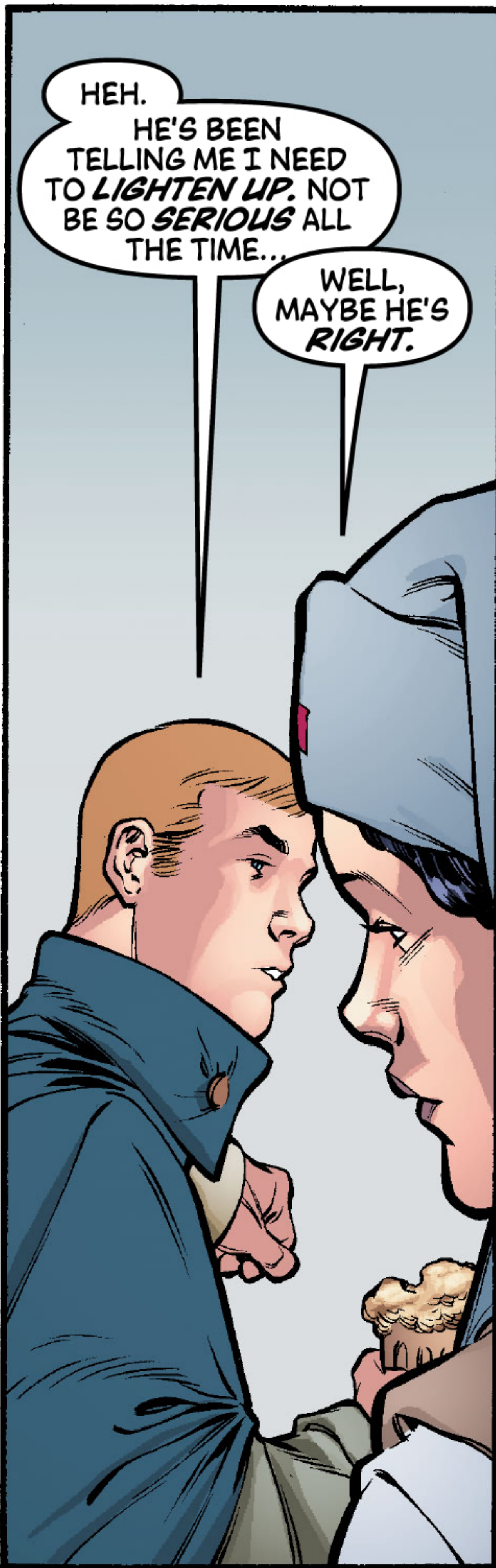
NO, NO --
DON'T *GET UP*. YOU'RE
NOT ON *DUTY*, AND WHO AM I
TO INTERRUPT A *PLEASANT*
AFTERNOON WITH
FRIENDS?

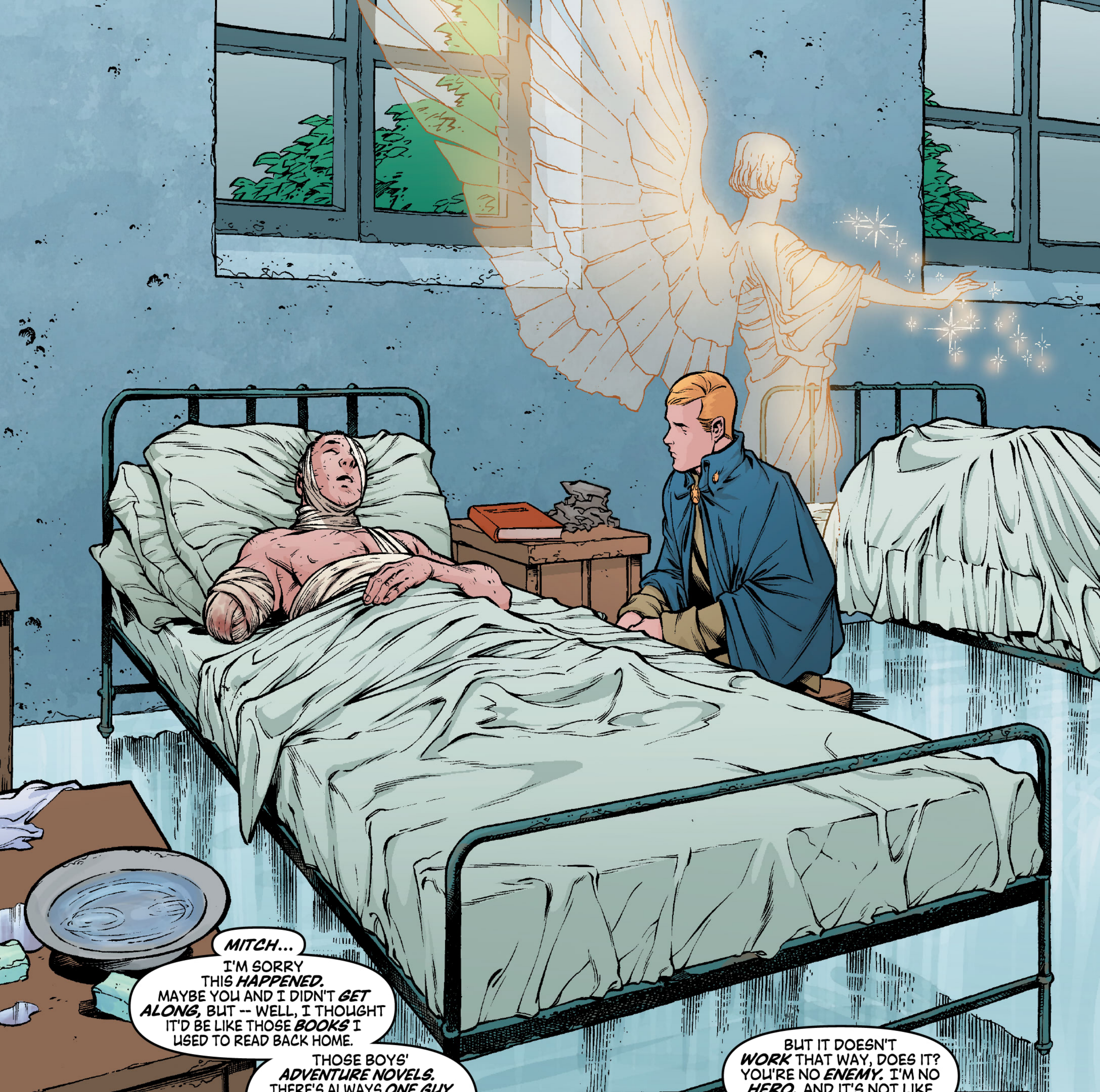
DON'T BELIEVE
HIS *LIES*, YOU TWO.
HE'S ONLY SAVED THE
WHOLE SQUADRON
THREE TIMES,
NOT TEN --



-- AND HE'D
ONLY HAVE *SEVEN*
POUR LE MERITE MEDALS
IF HIS COMMANDING
OFFICER WASN'T
HALF BLIND.

HOPE TO
SEE YOU LATER
THIS *EVENING*,
FLETCHER. BRING
YOUR FRIENDS.



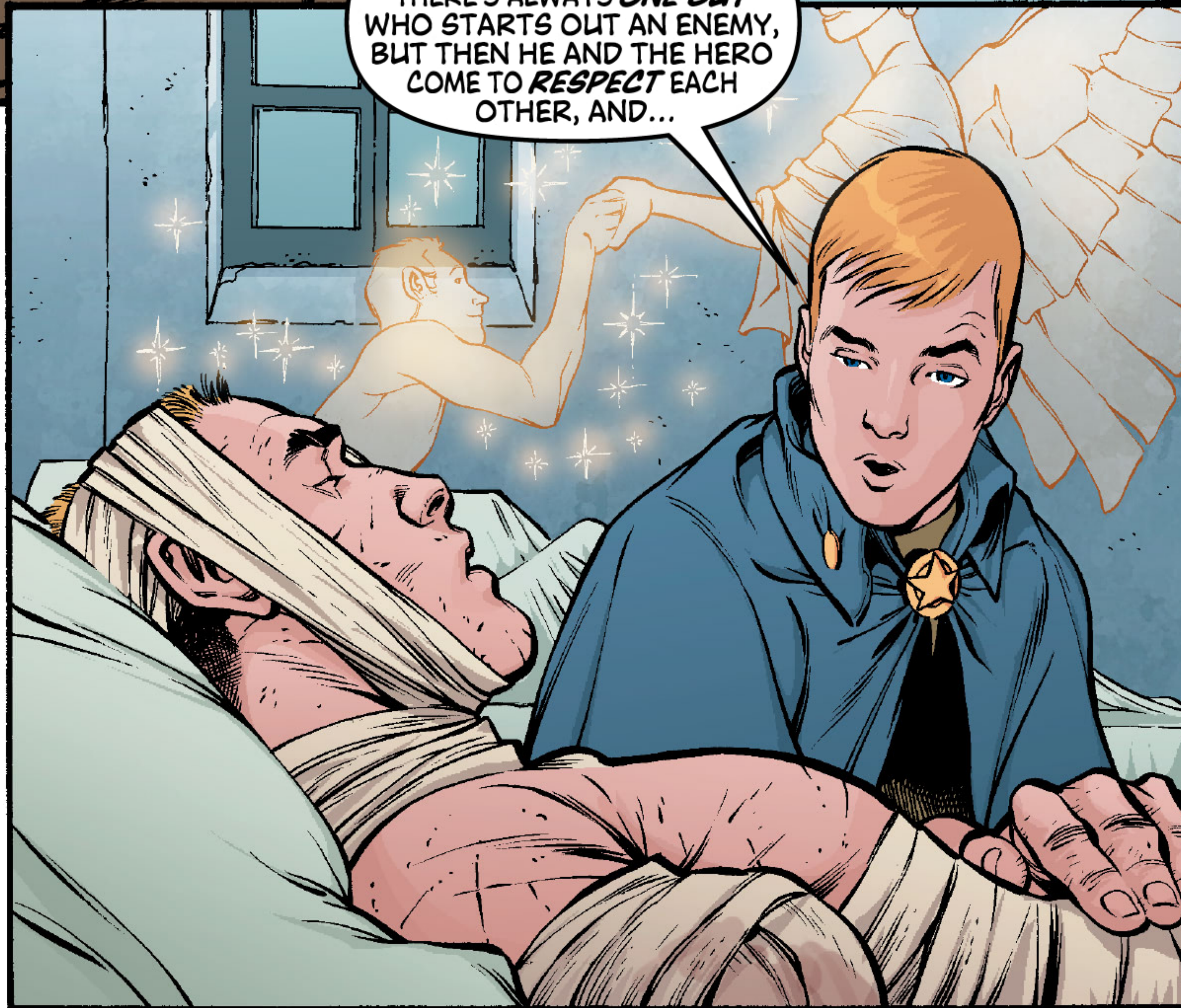


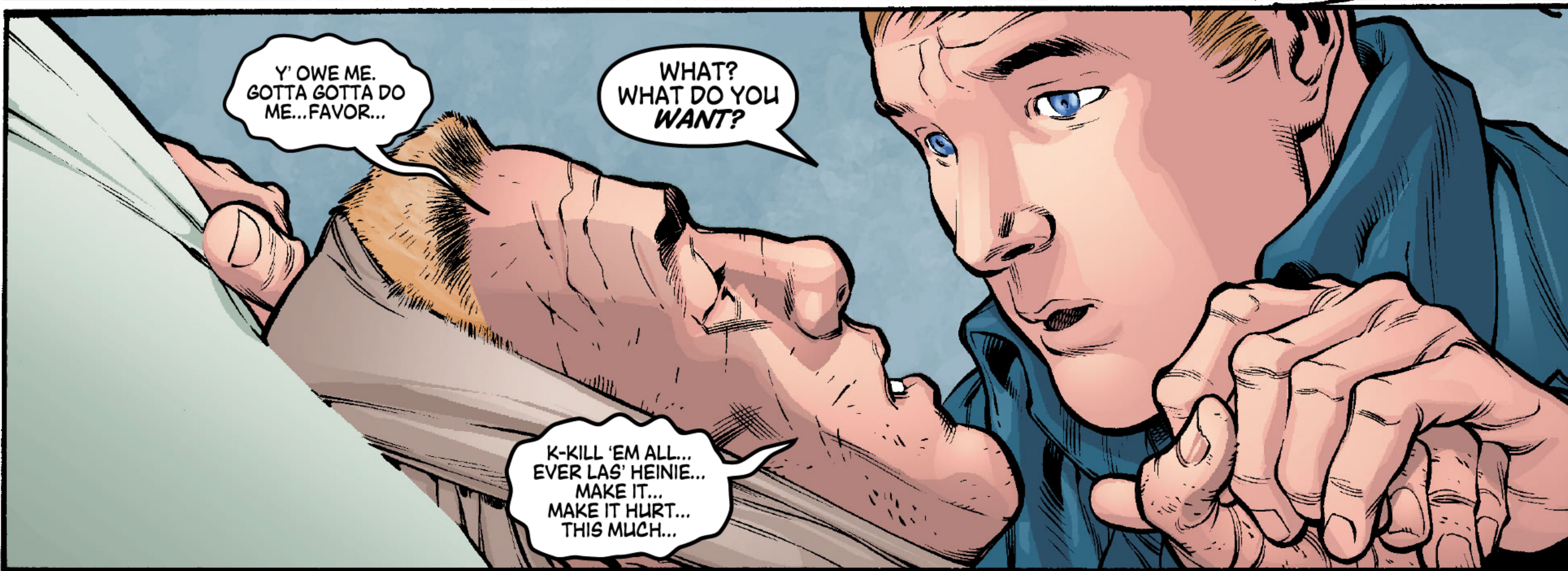
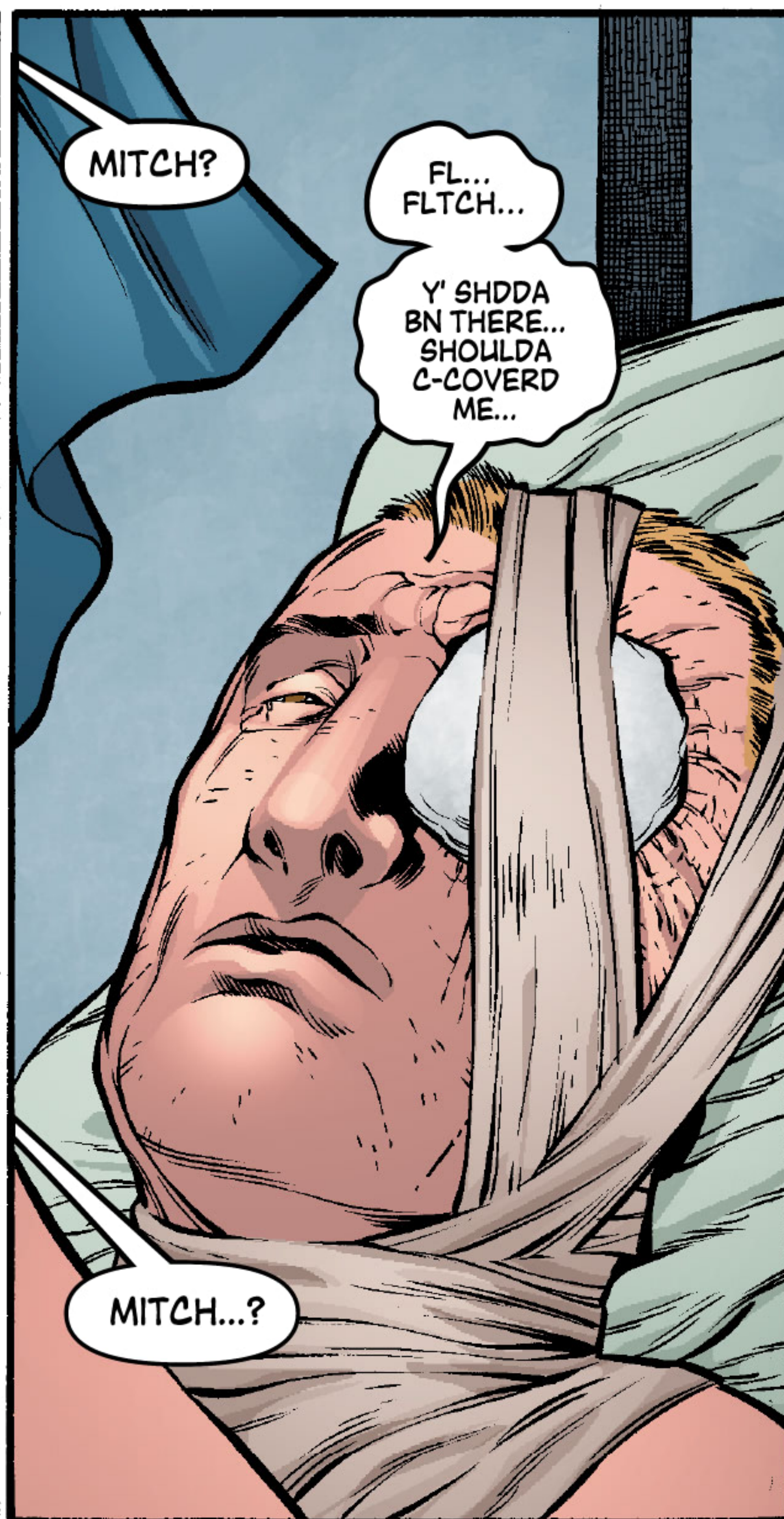
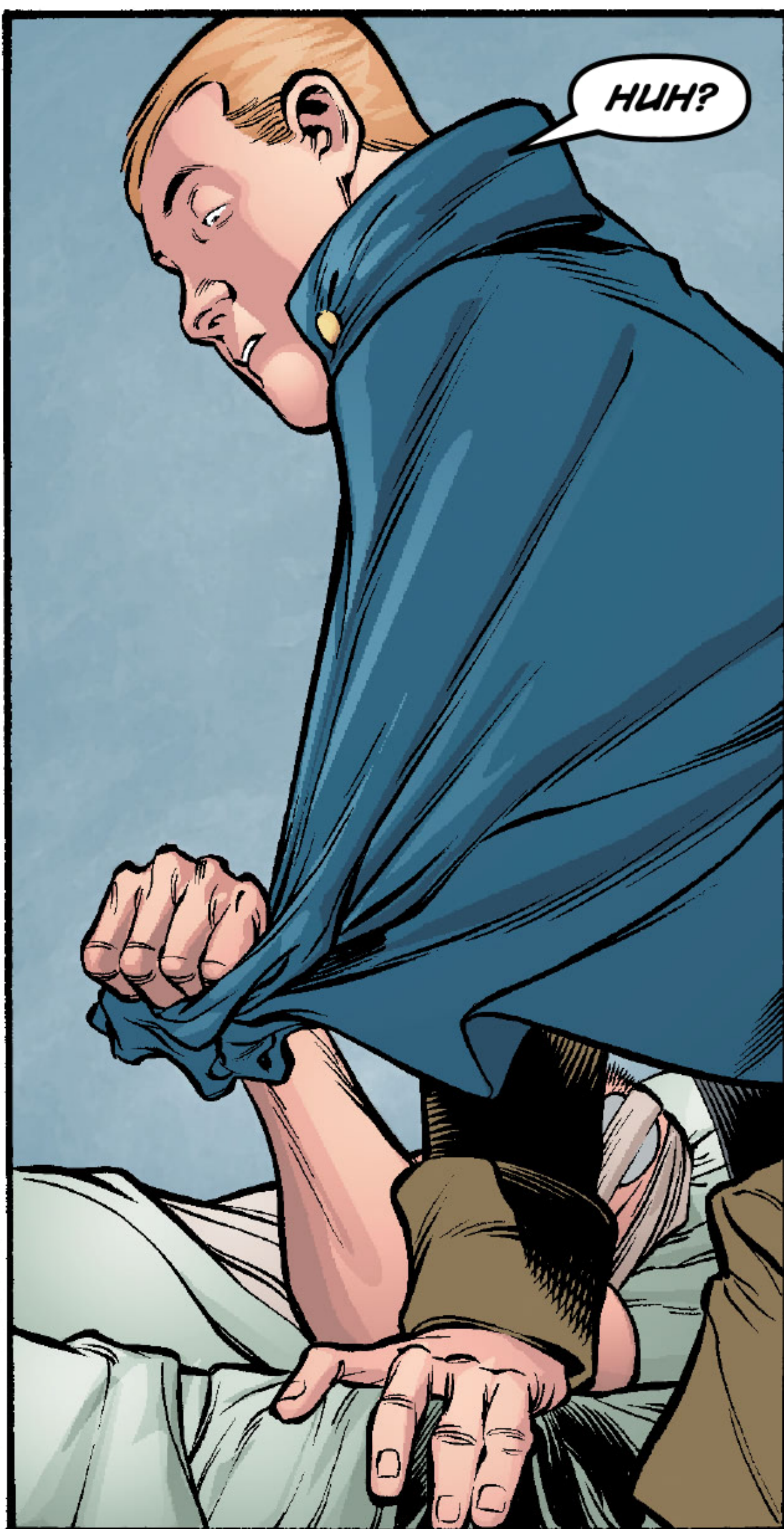
MITCH...
I'M SORRY
THIS **HAPPENED**.
MAYBE YOU AND I DIDN'T **GET**
ALONG, BUT -- WELL, I THOUGHT
IT'D BE LIKE THOSE **BOOKS** I
USED TO READ BACK HOME.

THOSE BOYS'
ADVENTURE NOVELS.
THERE'S ALWAYS **ONE GUY**
WHO STARTS OUT AN ENEMY,
BUT THEN HE AND THE HERO
COME TO **RESPECT** EACH
OTHER, AND...

BUT IT DOESN'T
WORK THAT WAY, DOES IT?
YOU'RE NO **ENEMY**. I'M NO
HERO. AND IT'S NOT LIKE
THOSE **BOOKS** AT ALL.

AND NOW
YOU...



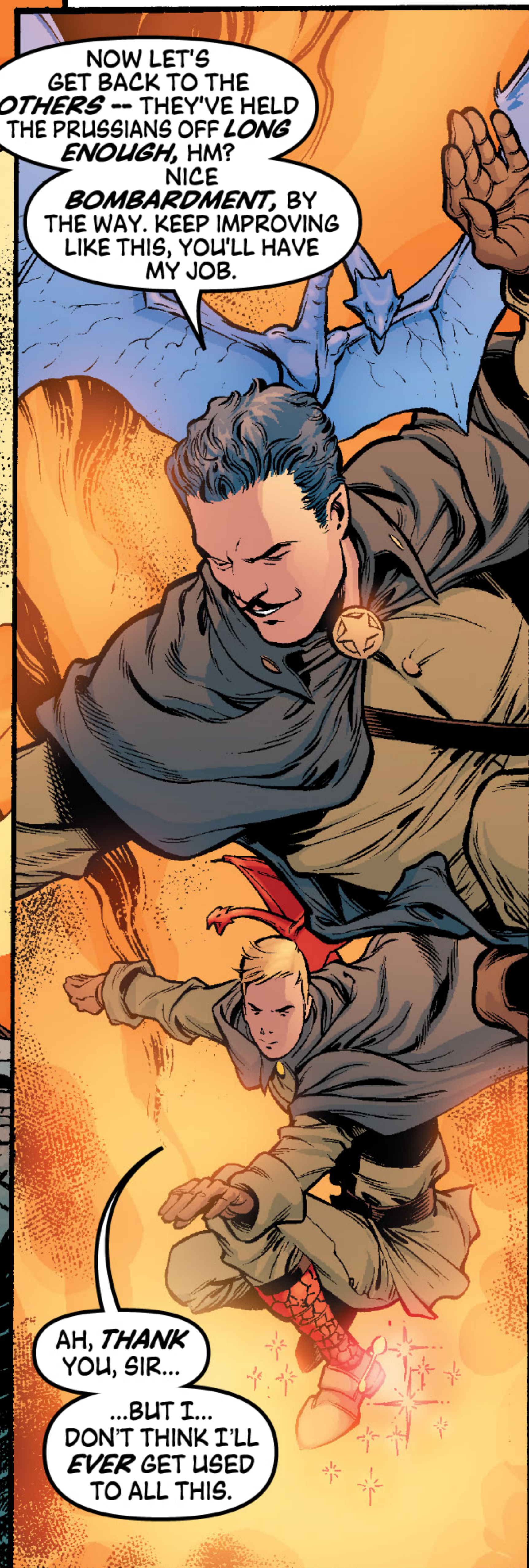




AND HEY
PRESTO -- THAT'S
ONE LESS **SUPPLY LINE**
THE CENTRAL POWERS
CAN USE.

NOW LET'S
GET BACK TO THE
OTHERS -- THEY'VE HELD
THE PRUSSIANS OFF **LONG**
ENOUGH, HM?

NICE
BOMBARDMENT, BY
THE WAY. KEEP IMPROVING
LIKE THIS, YOU'LL HAVE
MY JOB.



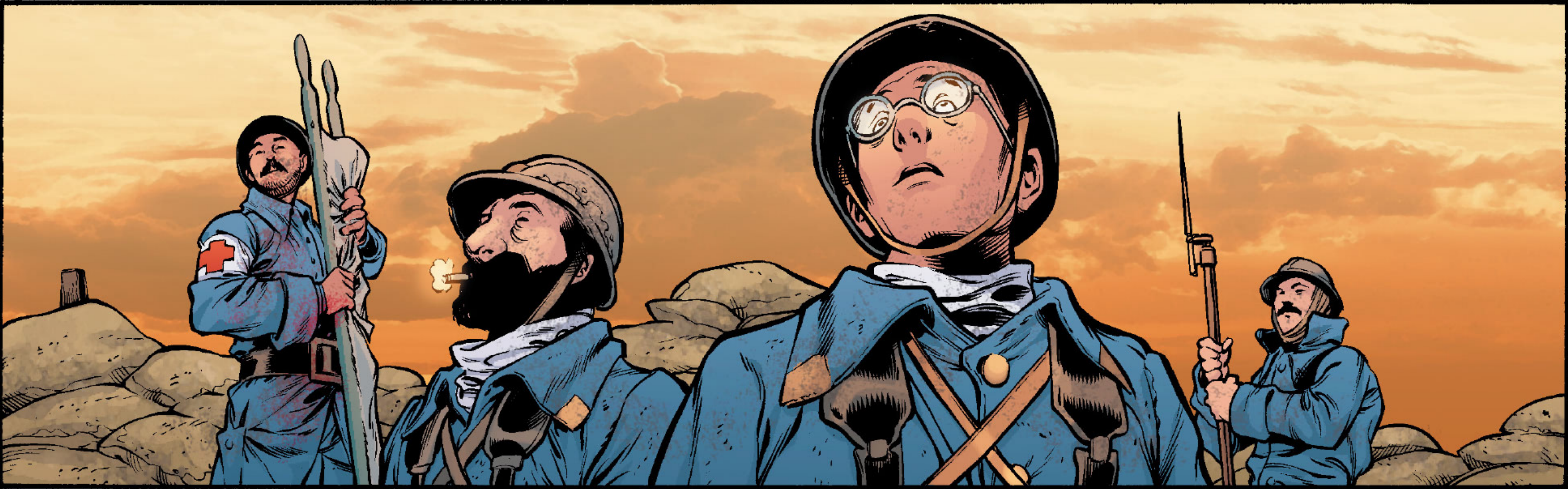
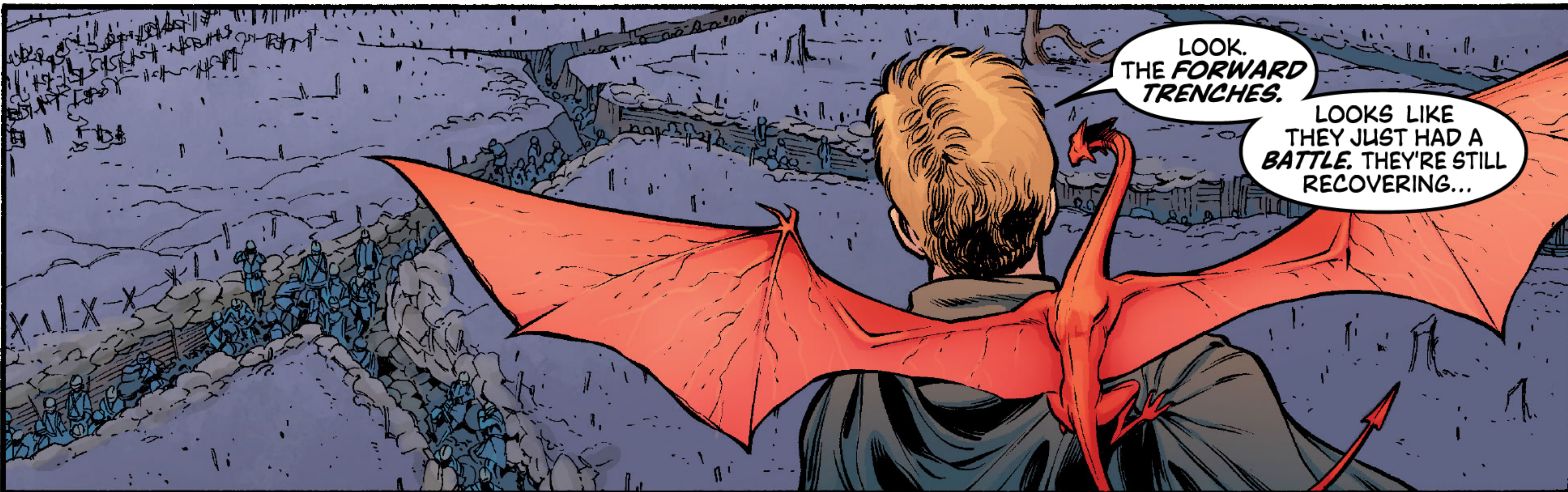
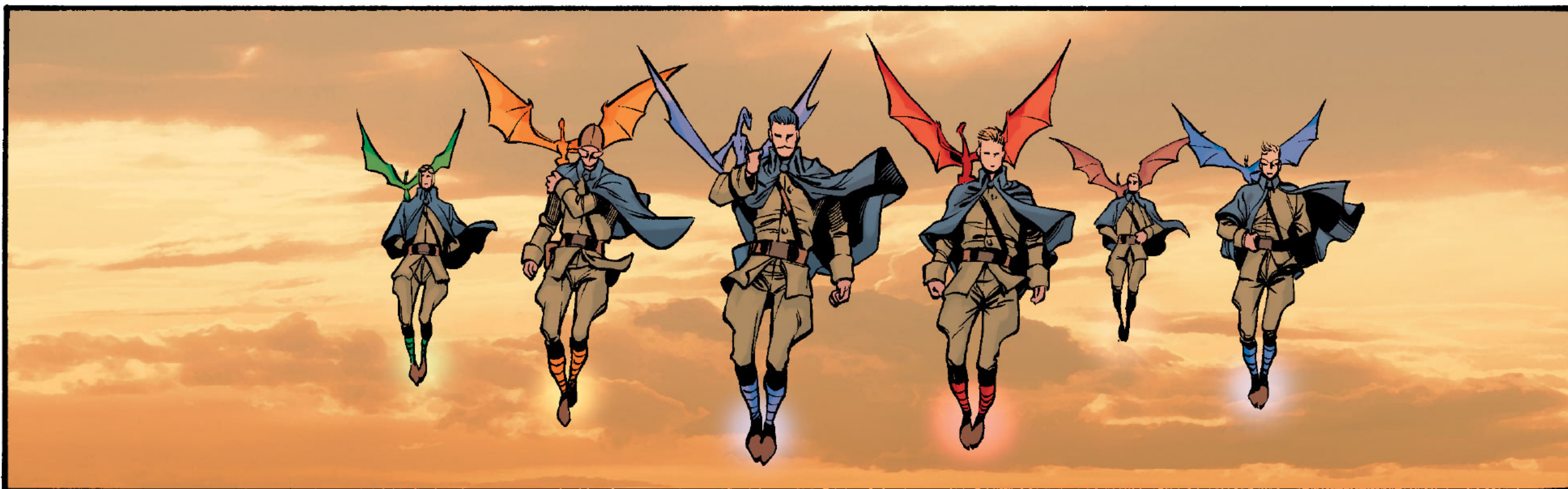
AH, **THANK**
YOU, SIR...

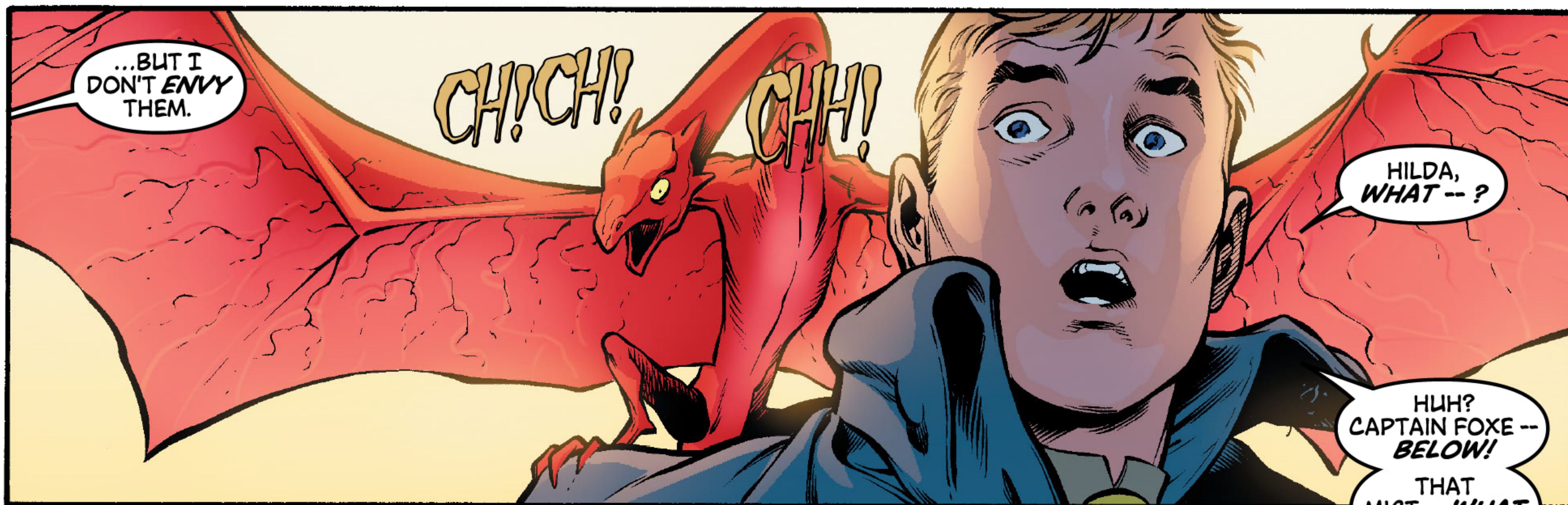
...BUT I...
DON'T THINK I'LL
EVER GET USED
TO ALL THIS.



GOOD.

LET'S HOPE
NONE OF US
DO.





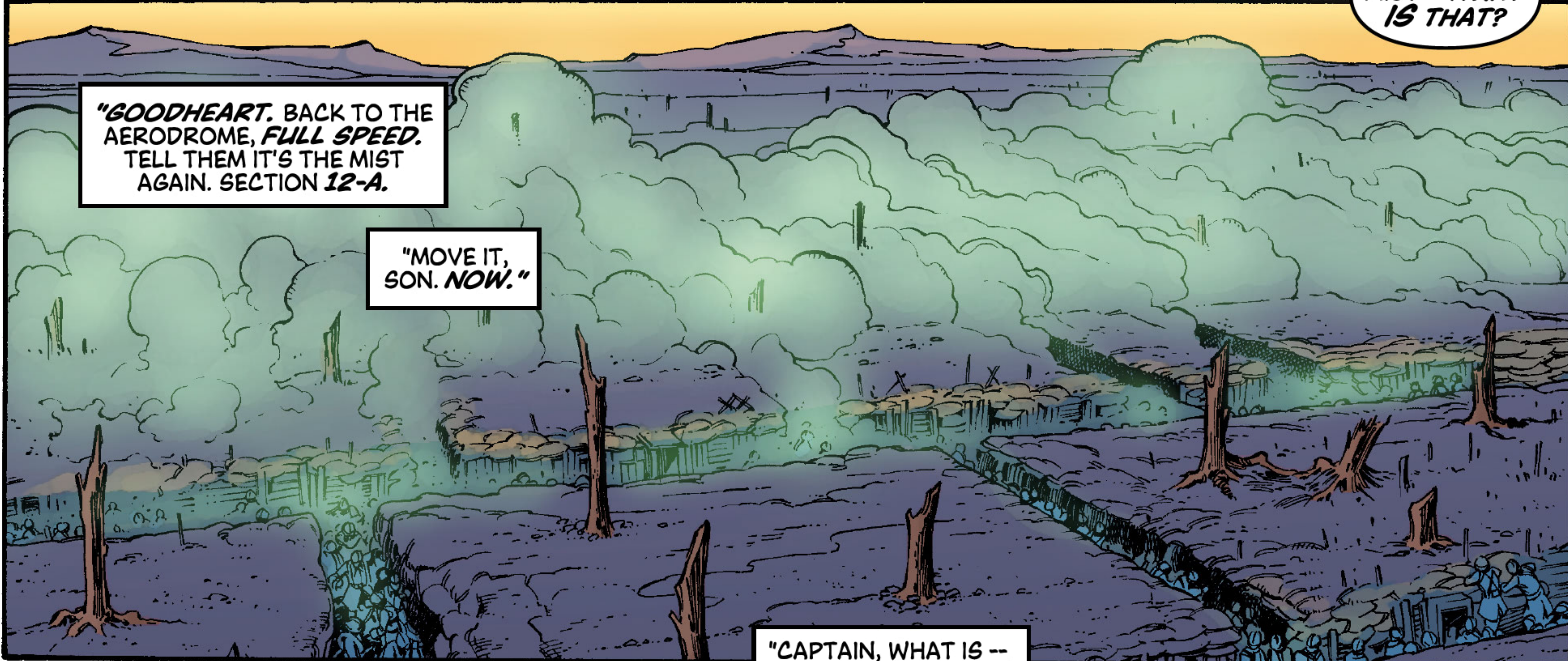
...BUT I DON'T ENVY THEM.

CH!CH! CHH!

HILDA, WHAT -- ?

HUH? CAPTAIN FOXE -- BELOW!

THAT MIST -- WHAT IS THAT?



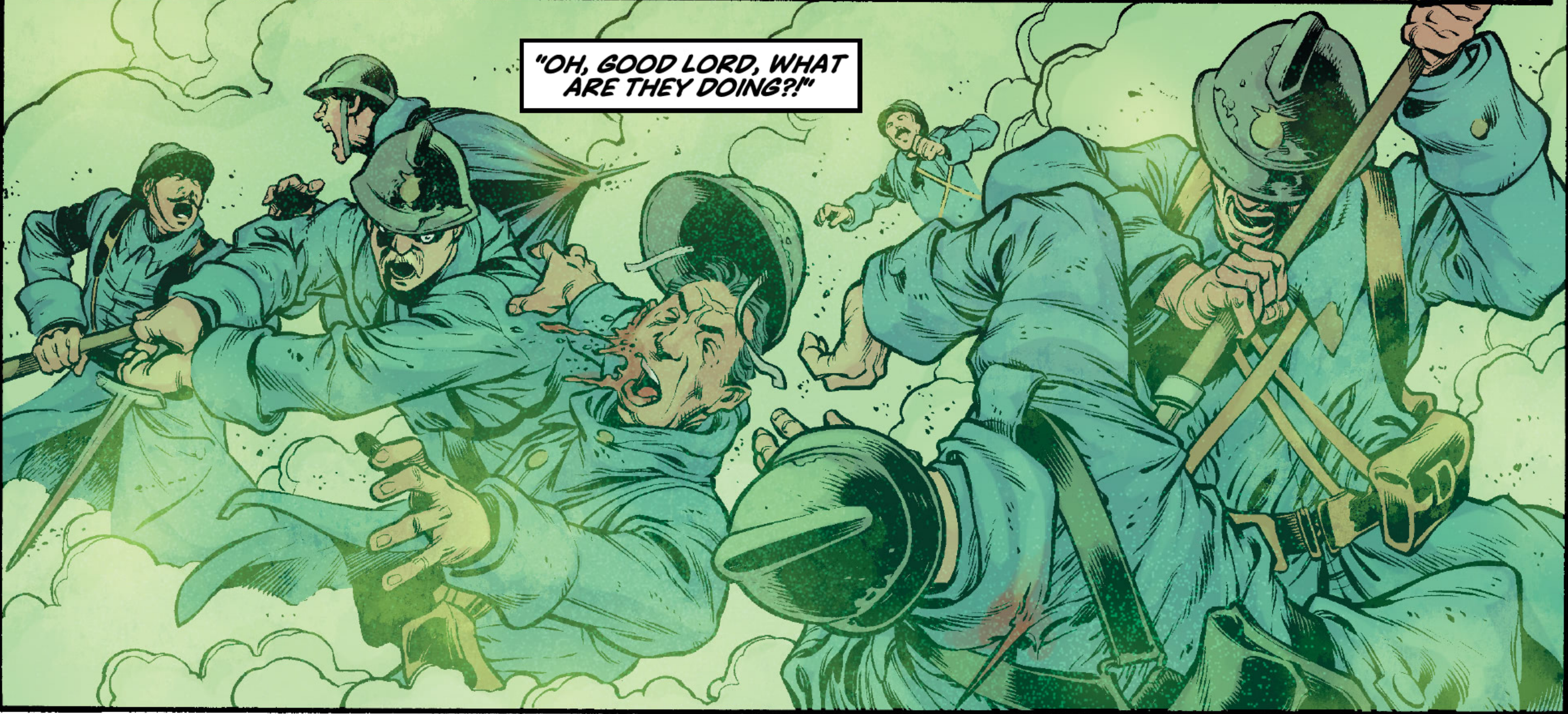
"GOODHEART. BACK TO THE AERODROME, FULL SPEED. TELL THEM IT'S THE MIST AGAIN. SECTION 12-A.

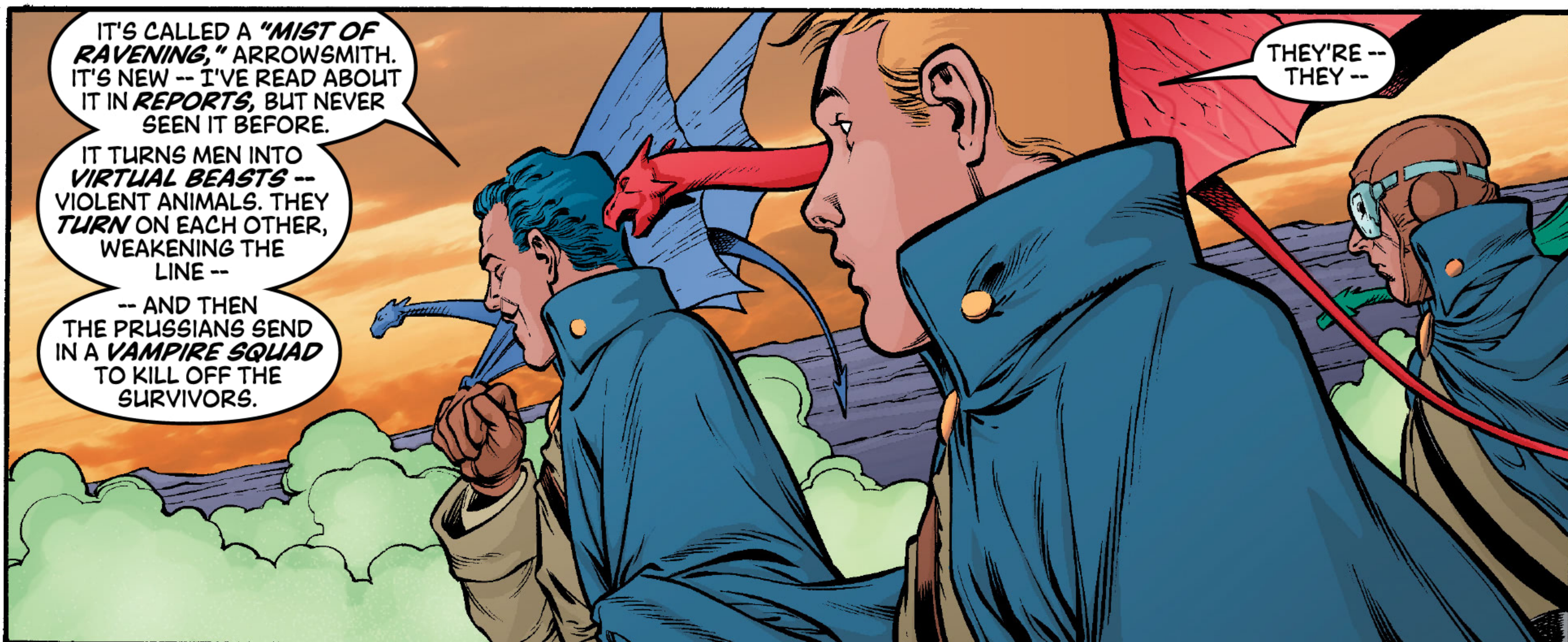
"MOVE IT, SON. NOW."

"CAPTAIN, WHAT IS -- OH, LORD, THE MEN! THEY'RE -- THEY'RE --



"OH, GOOD LORD, WHAT ARE THEY DOING?!"



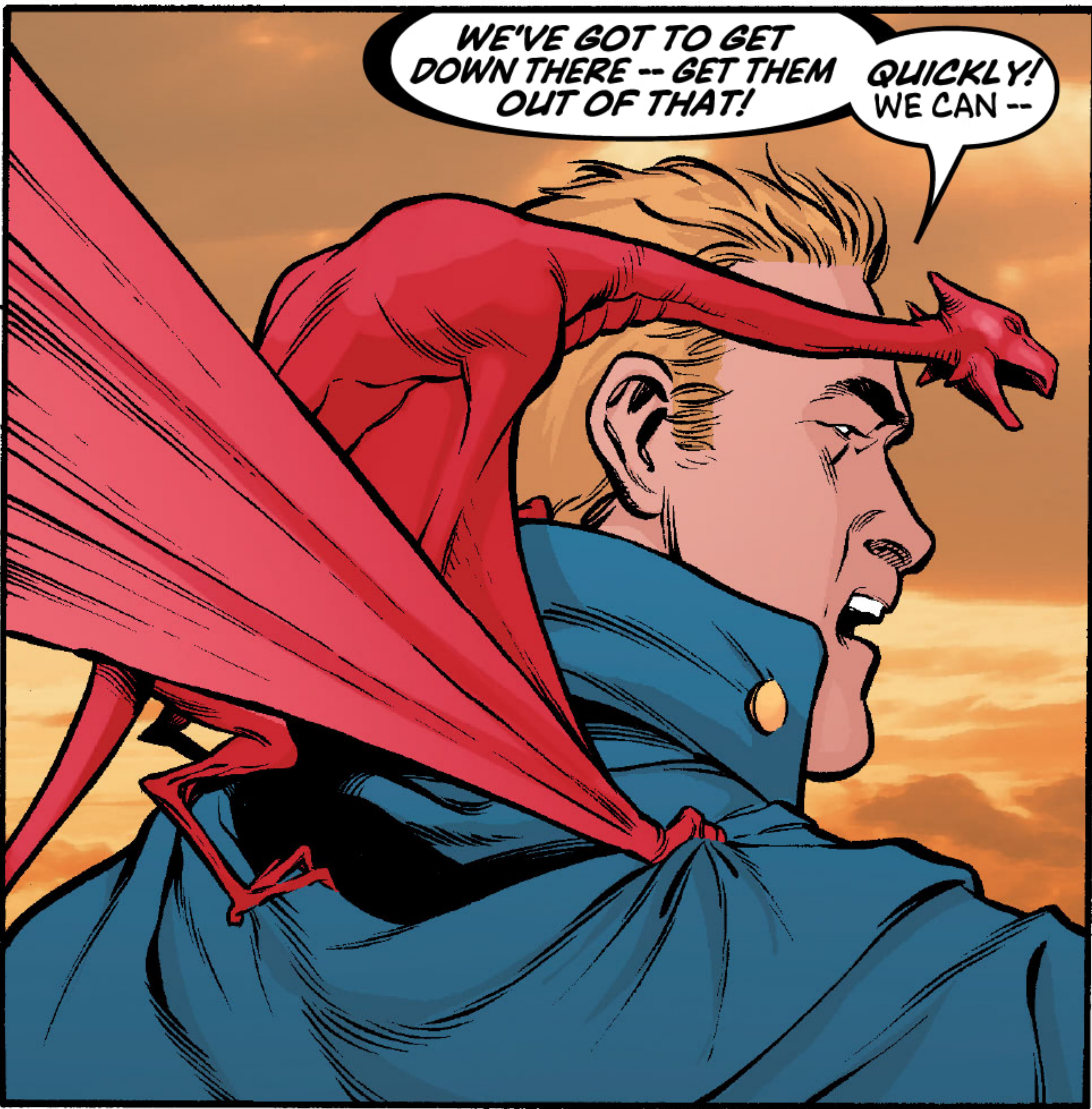


IT'S CALLED A "MIST OF RAVENING," ARROWSMITH. IT'S NEW -- I'VE READ ABOUT IT IN **REPORTS**, BUT NEVER SEEN IT BEFORE.

IT TURNS MEN INTO **VIRTUAL BEASTS** -- VIOLENT ANIMALS. THEY **TURN** ON EACH OTHER, WEAKENING THE LINE --

-- AND THEN THE PRUSSIANS SEND IN A **VAMPIRE SQUAD** TO KILL OFF THE SURVIVORS.

THEY'RE -- THEY --



WE'VE GOT TO GET DOWN THERE -- GET THEM OUT OF THAT! QUICKLY! WE CAN --



NO, SON -- WE **CAN'T**. WE HAVE NO **DEFENSE** AGAINST THE MIST -- OUR WIZARDS ARE WORKING ON IT, BUT NOTHING YET. IT'D JUST TURN **US**, TOO.

ALL WE CAN DO IS **REPORT** IT -- CALL IN MAGES TO **DISPERSE** THE MIST, **DRIVE OFF** THE VAMPIRES.



BUT IT -- HOW CAN THEY DO THIS?! IT'S **HELLISH! INHUMAN!**

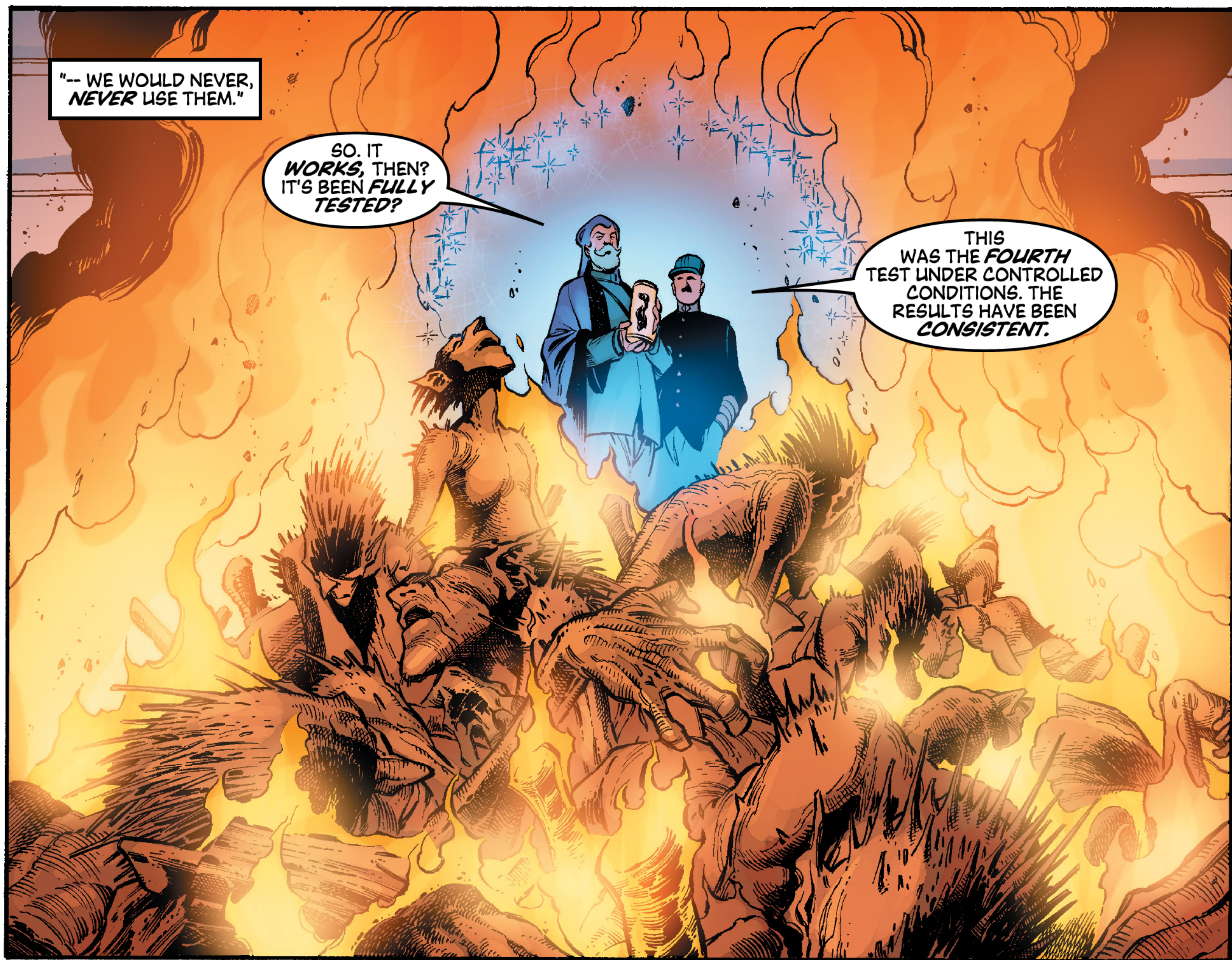


YES. YES, IT IS. AND THAT'S THE **DIFFERENCE** BETWEEN US AND THEM, FLETCHER.

THEY'LL UNLEASH ANY **INSANE, VICIOUS, MONSTROUS SPELL** OR **POTION** THEY CAN CREATE, AND **THAT'S** WHY THEY HAVE TO BE STOPPED.



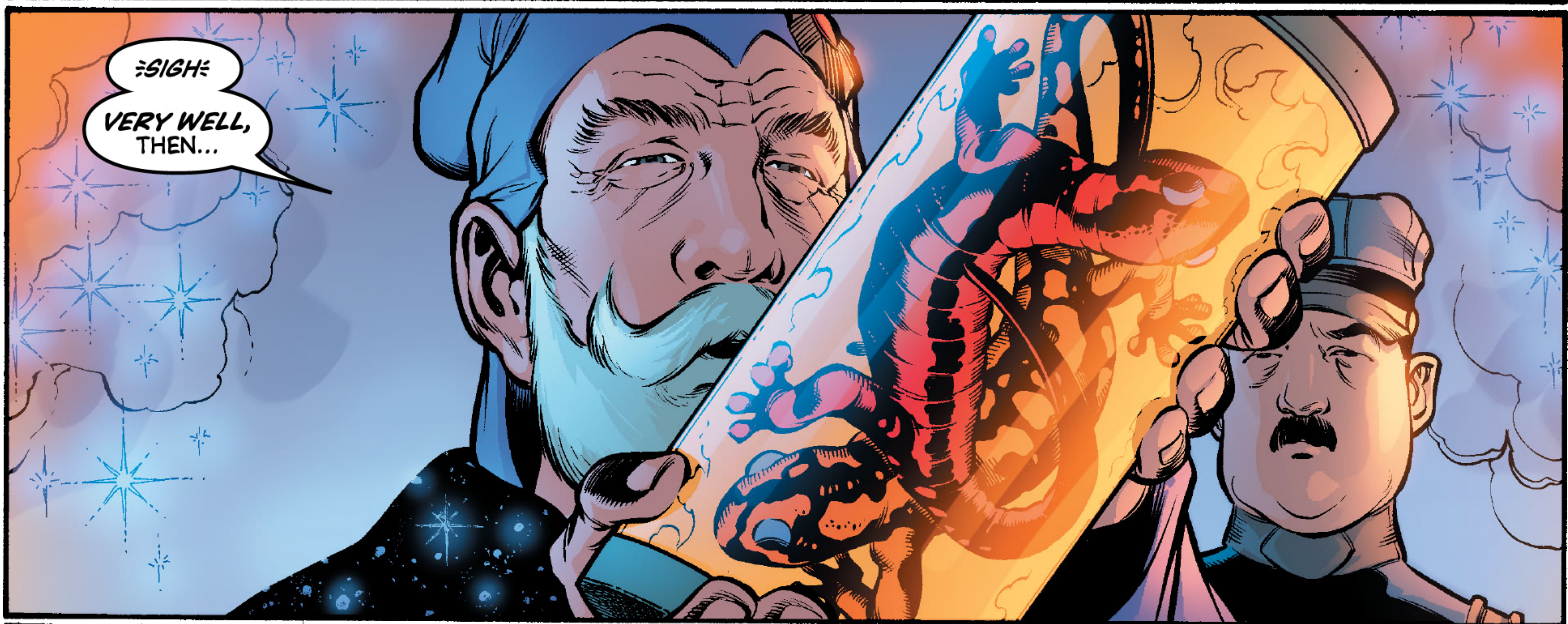
BUT US -- EVEN IF OUR WIZARDS HAD THE SORT OF MINDS THAT COULD EVEN **THINK** OF SUCH THINGS --



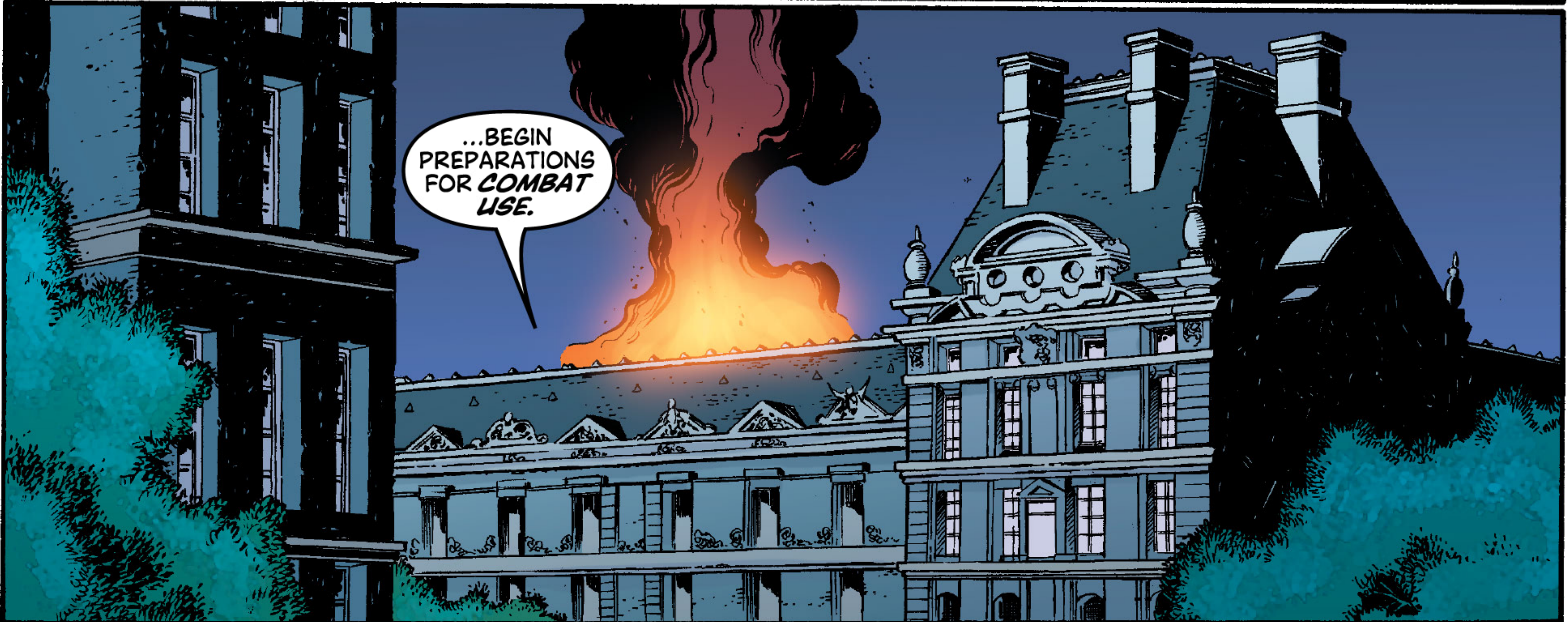
"-- WE WOULD NEVER,
NEVER USE THEM."

SO. IT
WORKS, THEN?
IT'S BEEN *FULLY*
TESTED?

THIS
WAS THE *FOURTH*
TEST UNDER CONTROLLED
CONDITIONS. THE
RESULTS HAVE BEEN
CONSISTENT.

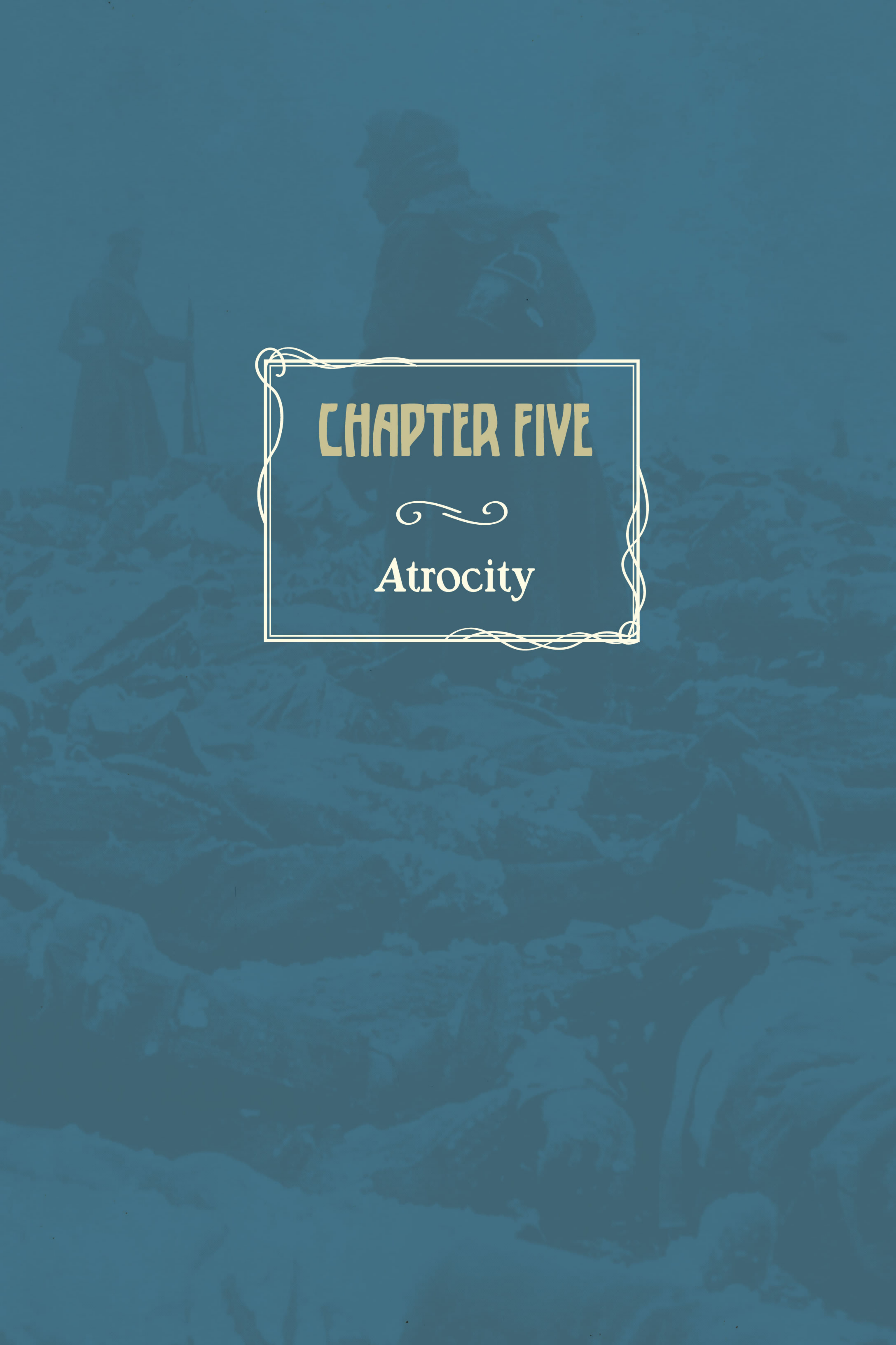


SIGH
VERY WELL,
THEN...



...BEGIN
PREPARATIONS
FOR *COMBAT*
USE.





CHAPTER FIVE

Atrocity

*Aerodrome Cachy.
October 1915*

Dear Rocky,

I don't know where you are these days, whether you're back with your unit, whether you're even alive.

HO, LADS!

ROLL OUT, ALL! TIME TO EARN OUR PAY AGAIN!

I don't think this'll reach you anyway. The military censors won't let this on through to anyone.

≡ NNH ≡
I SWEAR,
THE NIGHTS GET
SHORTER AND
SHORTER...

**TOO MUCH
CHAMPAGNE,
DICKIE.**

**YOU NEED
TO STAY IN YOUR
BARRACKS, READ
YOUR BIBLE LIKE THE
CLEAN YOUNG MAN
YOUR MA STILL
THINKS YOU
ARE...**

*But I have to write it down,
have to get it on paper.
And you're the only one who'll
really understand.*

*It started like
any other day...*

**CAREFUL WITH
THAT, FLETCH. IF I
GO UP, I'D RATHER IT WAS
SOMEONE I DON'T
LIKE DID IT.**

**NOT
THAT IT'D
MATTER MUCH,
IN THE LONG
RUN...**



*It wasn't, though.
It wasn't.*

IS THIS IT,
CAPTAIN FOXE?
THE **BIG** ONE?

IT'S
JUST A **JOB**,
LAD.



THEY'RE ALL
JUST **JOB**S. WE DO
WHAT WE'RE **TOLD**, WE
COME HOME, WE GO INTO
THE VILLAGE FOR
DRINKS.

THERE'S A
NEW SHIPMENT OF
NURSES DUE AT THE
HOSPITAL TODAY --
SO MAYBE EVEN YOU
CAN GET A **DATE**
TONIGHT, PHILIP!

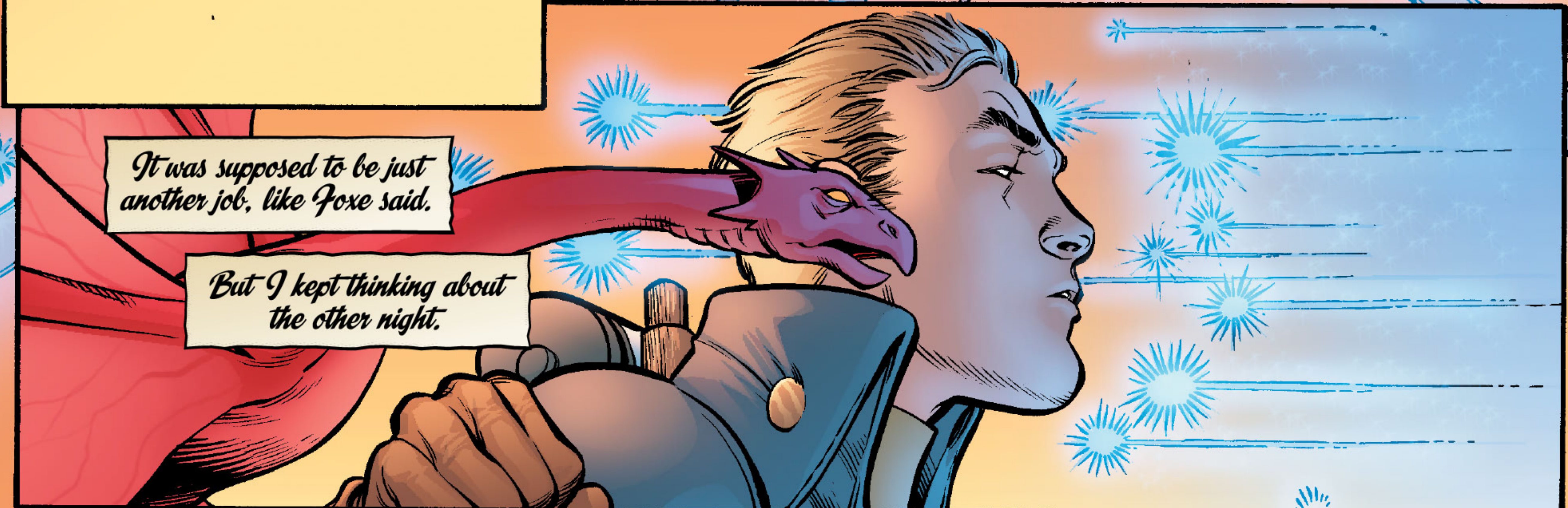


GATHER **CLOSE**,
ALL, AND SHIELD YOUR
EYES. I'M TRIGGERING
THE **CLOAKING**
SPELL.

THE
DAZZLE WON'T
LAST --

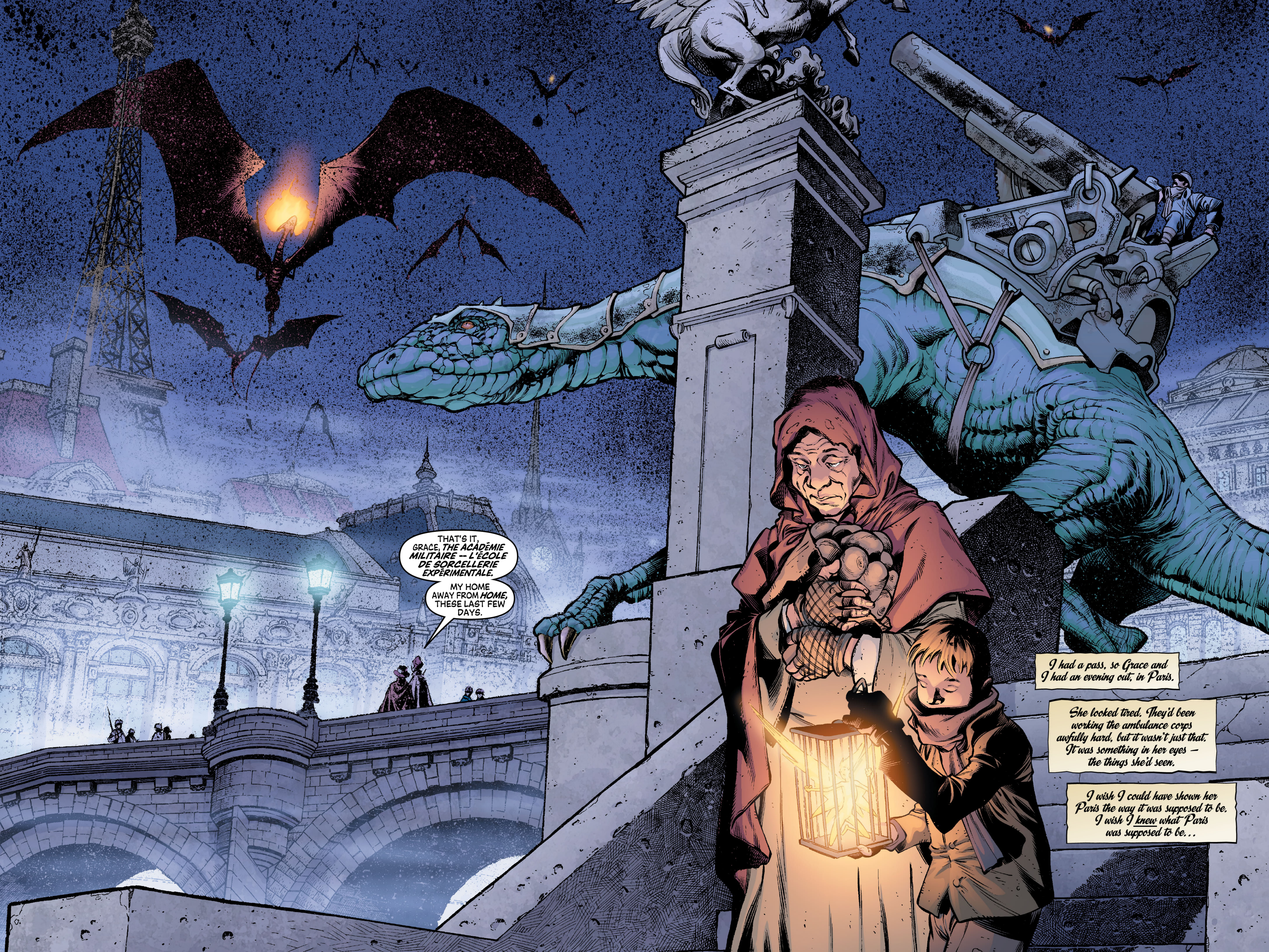


-- BUT THE
ENEMY WON'T
SEE US, NOT FOR
AN HOUR OR
TWO...



*It was supposed to be just
another job, like Foxe said.*

*But I kept thinking about
the other night.*



THAT'S IT,
GRACE, THE ACADÉMIE
MILITAIRE -- L'ÉCOLE
DE SORCELLERIE
EXPÉRIMENTALE.

MY HOME
AWAY FROM HOME,
THESE LAST FEW
DAYS.

*I had a pass, so Grace and
I had an evening out, in Paris.*

*She looked tired. They'd been
working the ambulance corps
awfully hard, but it wasn't just that.
It was something in her eyes --
the things she'd seen.*

*I wish I could have shown her
Paris the way it was supposed to be.
I wish I knew what Paris
was supposed to be...*



WE'VE BEEN TRAINING THERE FOR A *MISSION*. THEY WON'T TELL US MUCH ABOUT IT...

WELL.

AT LEAST YOU'RE WORKING WITH THE *SENIOR WIZARDRY CORPS*, RIGHT?

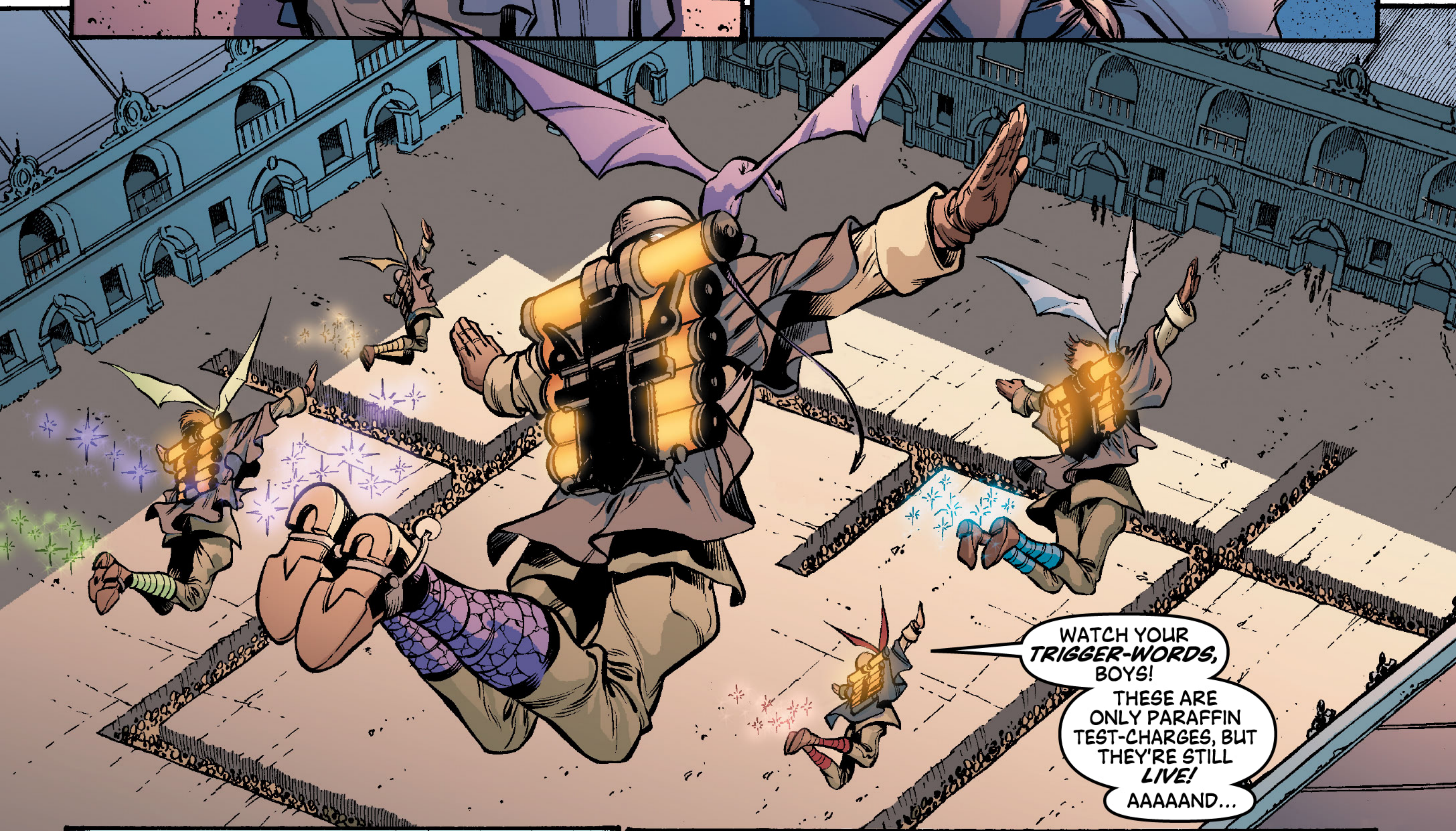
THEY'RE THE BEST *ALBION* AND *GALLIA* HAVE TO OFFER. THEY KNOW WHAT THEY'RE *DOING*.



DO THEY?

I SUPPOSE THIS IS ALL *TOP SECRET*, AND I SHOULDN'T TELL YOU ANYTHING, BUT SOMETHING *HAPPENED* THIS MORNING.

WE WERE TESTING THE *LAUNCHERS*...



WATCH YOUR *TRIGGER-WORDS*, BOYS!

THESE ARE ONLY PARAFFIN TEST-CHARGES, BUT THEY'RE STILL *LIVE!*

AAAAAND...

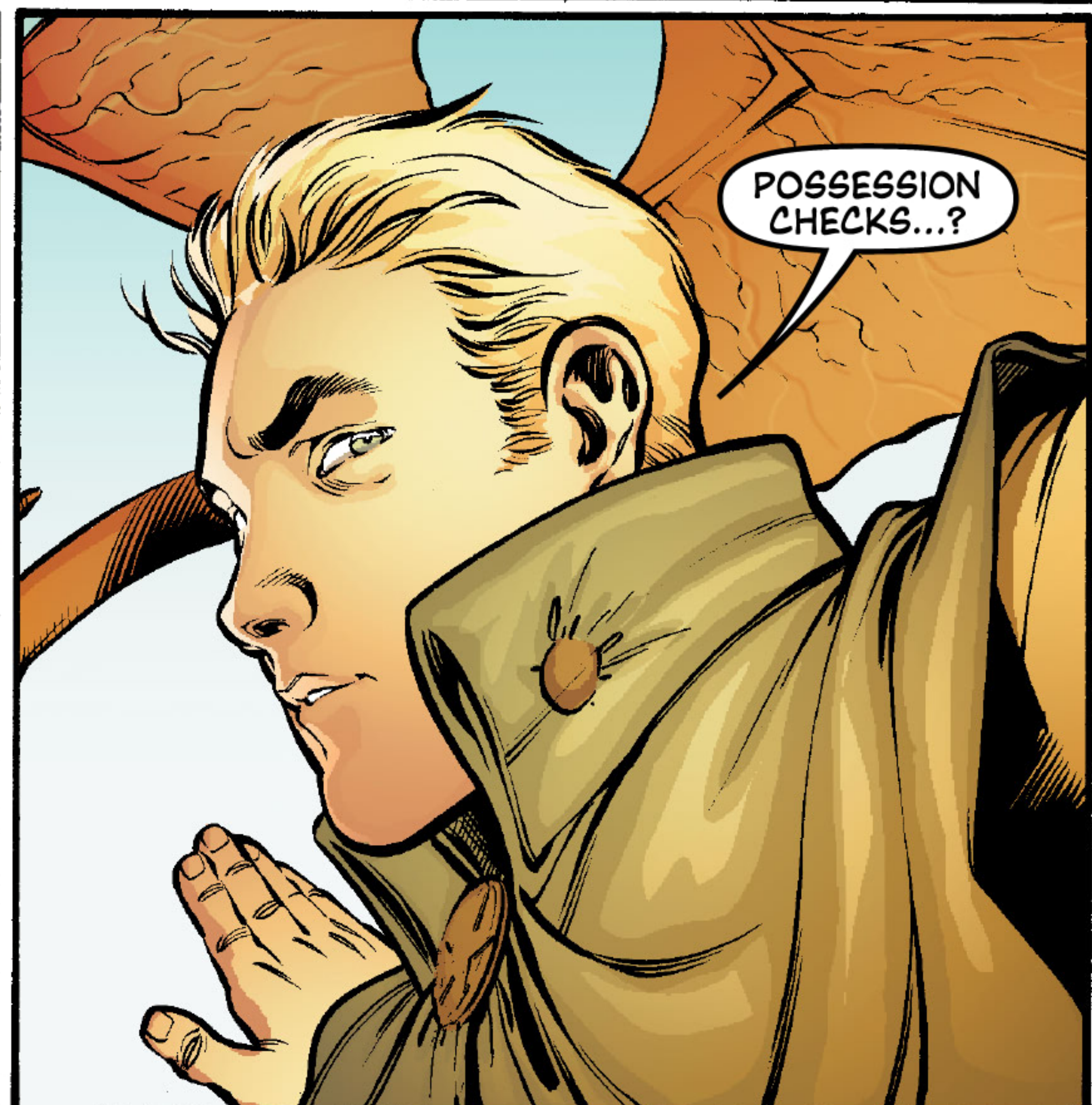
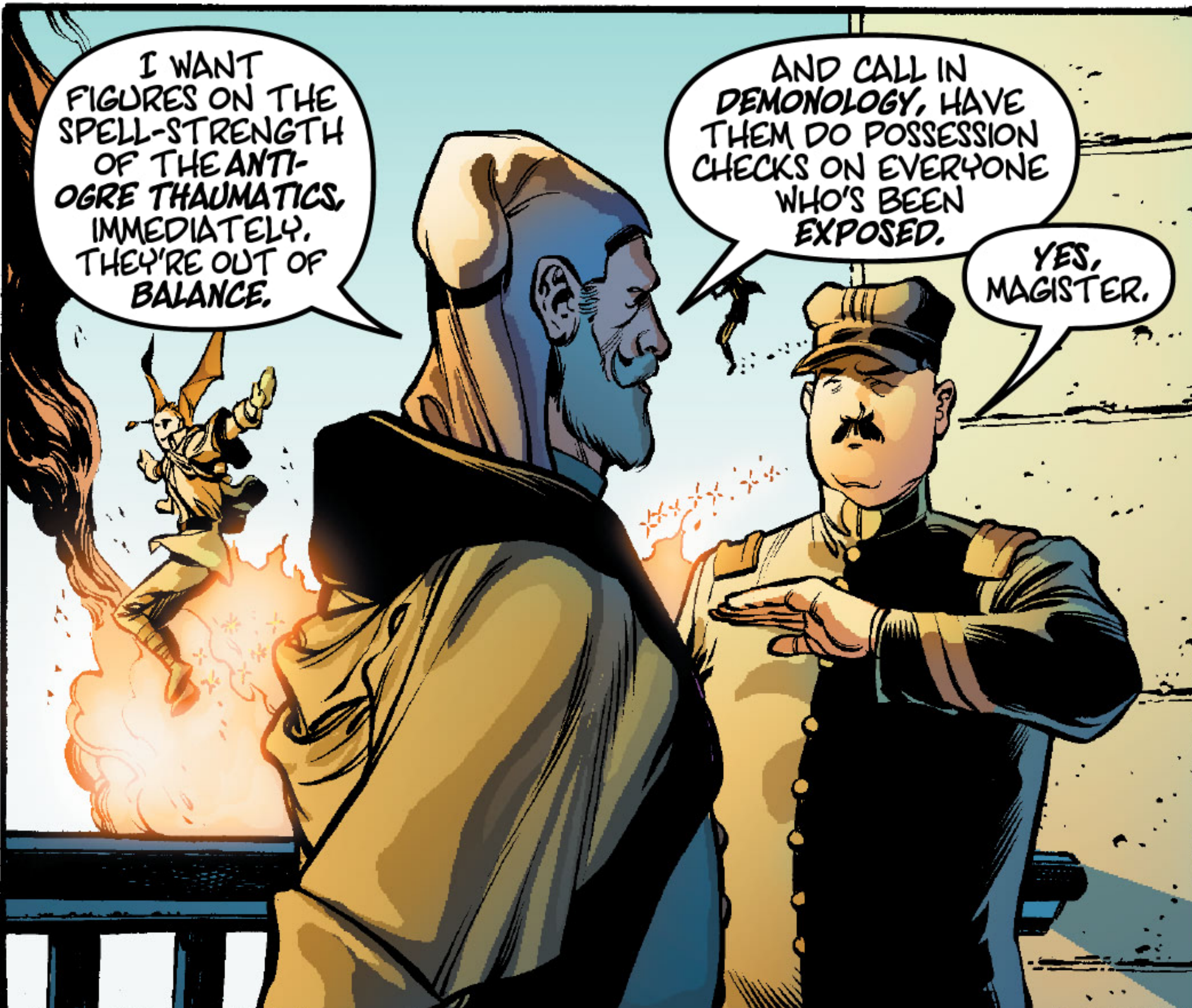
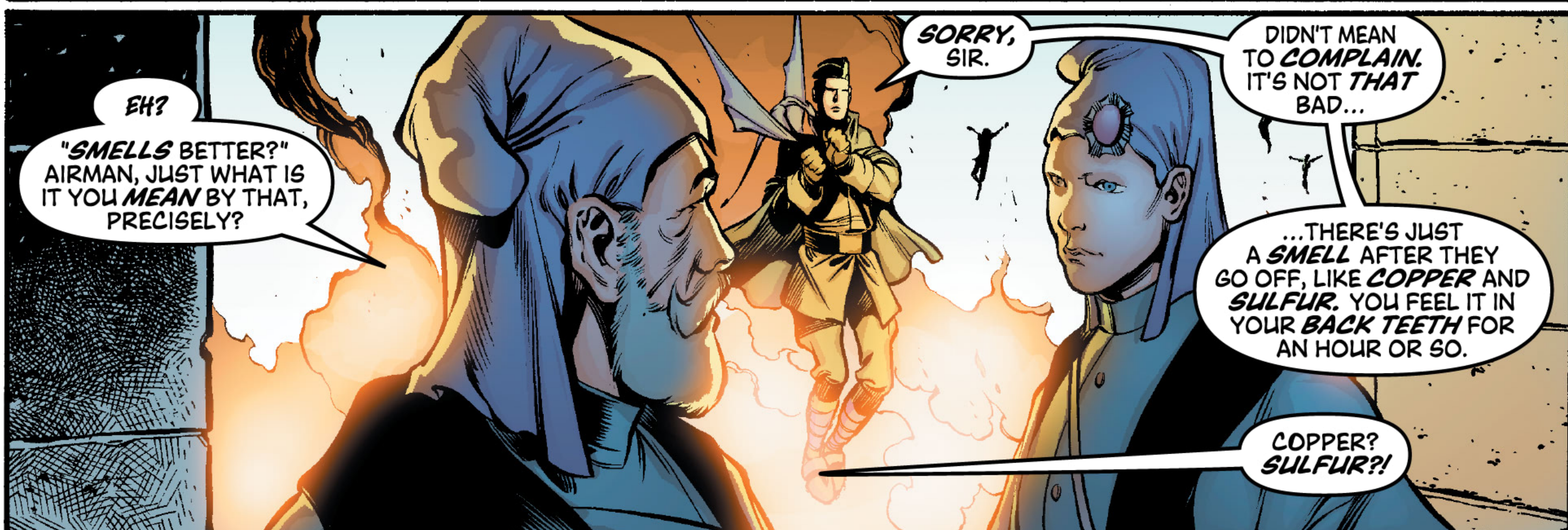


LAUNCH!



PAFF
PAFF

PAFF
PAFF





I DON'T THINK I WAS SUPPOSED TO **HEAR** THAT -- AND MY GALLIC ISN'T THAT GOOD YET ANYWAY. BUT I'M NOT SO **SURE** ABOUT THE WIZARDRY CORPS.

YES, THEY'RE THE BEST, BUT THEY'RE USED TO STUDYING THINGS FOR DECADES...OR **CENTURIES**. THESE **MASS-PRODUCED** SPELLS, AND NEW **WEAPONS**...

I THINK THEY'RE JUST **MAKING THINGS UP** AS THEY GO ALONG...



THEY'RE JUST DOING WHAT THEY **HAVE TO** TO WIN THIS AWFUL WAR. AND IT'S **GOT** TO BE WON, FLETCHER.

THE PRUSSIANS, THE TYROLIANS, THEY'RE **MONSTERS. MONSTERS!**

WHAT THEY DO...



SOME OF THE **WOUNDED** I'VE PICKED UP -- HIT BY **INFERNAL SPELLS**, TORN APART BY FOUL CREATURES...

JUST LAST WEEK, WE TRIED TO RETRIEVE A SQUAD THAT HAD BEEN **ATTACKED**.

THEY WERE **YOUNGER** THAN WE ARE, AND THEY WERE IN SUCH **PAIN**. AND WHEN WE TRIED TO LOAD THEM INTO THE AMBULANCES, THEY **JUST**...

...THEY **FELL APART**...

GRACE...



I KNOW IT'S **BAD**, GRACE. BUT YOU'RE A **VOLUNTEER**, YOU CAN GO HOME...

THAT WON'T **STOP** IT, WILL IT? THAT'LL JUST MEAN **SOMEONE ELSE** HAS TO DEAL WITH IT. NO, I'LL STAY. DO WHAT I CAN TO HELP US **WIN**.

OH, FLETCH -- I'VE **GOT** SOMETHING FOR YOU.



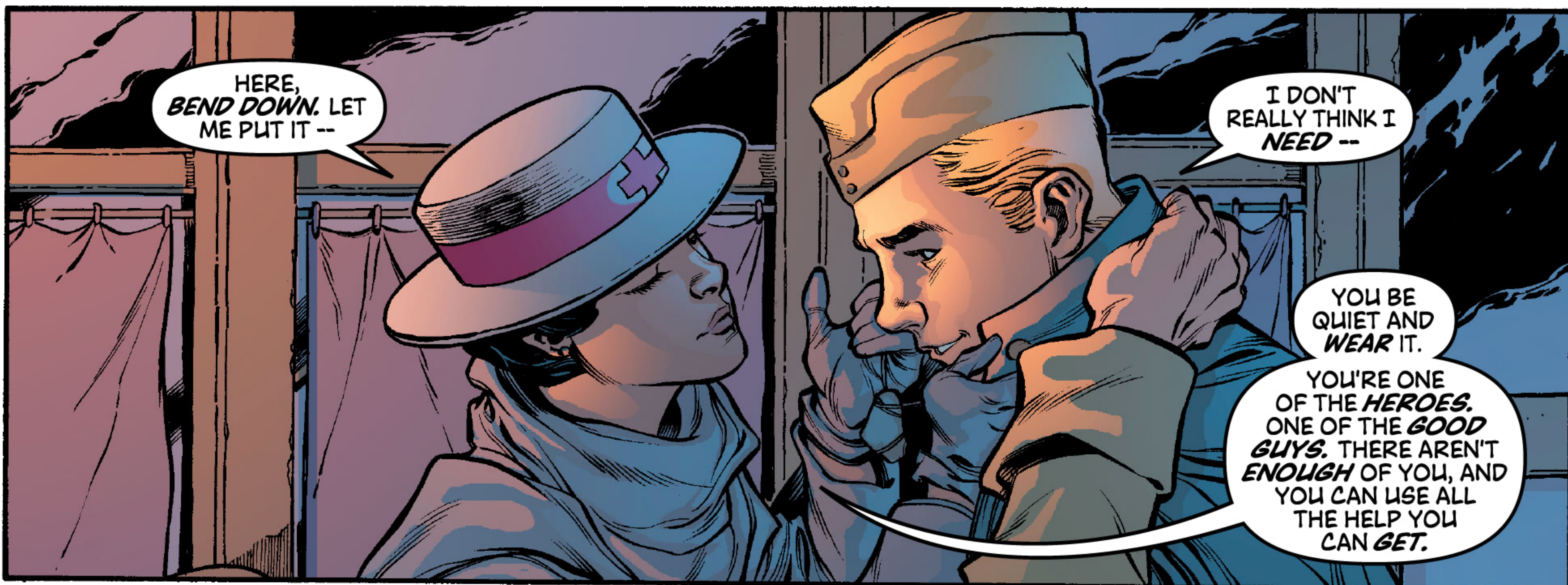
ROCKY HAD TO GO, TO REJOIN HIS **UNIT**...

...BUT HE **LEFT** THIS FOR YOU.



HE KEPT SAYING THE GODS ARE **TROUBLED**, UNHAPPY...

...AND HE WANTED YOU TO BE **PROTECTED**.



HERE,
BEND DOWN. LET
ME PUT IT --

I DON'T
REALLY THINK I
NEED --

YOU BE
QUIET AND
WEAR IT.

YOU'RE ONE
OF THE **HEROES**.
ONE OF THE **GOOD
GUYS**. THERE AREN'T
ENOUGH OF YOU, AND
YOU CAN USE ALL
THE HELP YOU
CAN **GET**.

So I wore the amulet.
Sometimes it's warm, sometimes
it's cold. I don't know if that's
magic or just because it's stone.

But it might have --

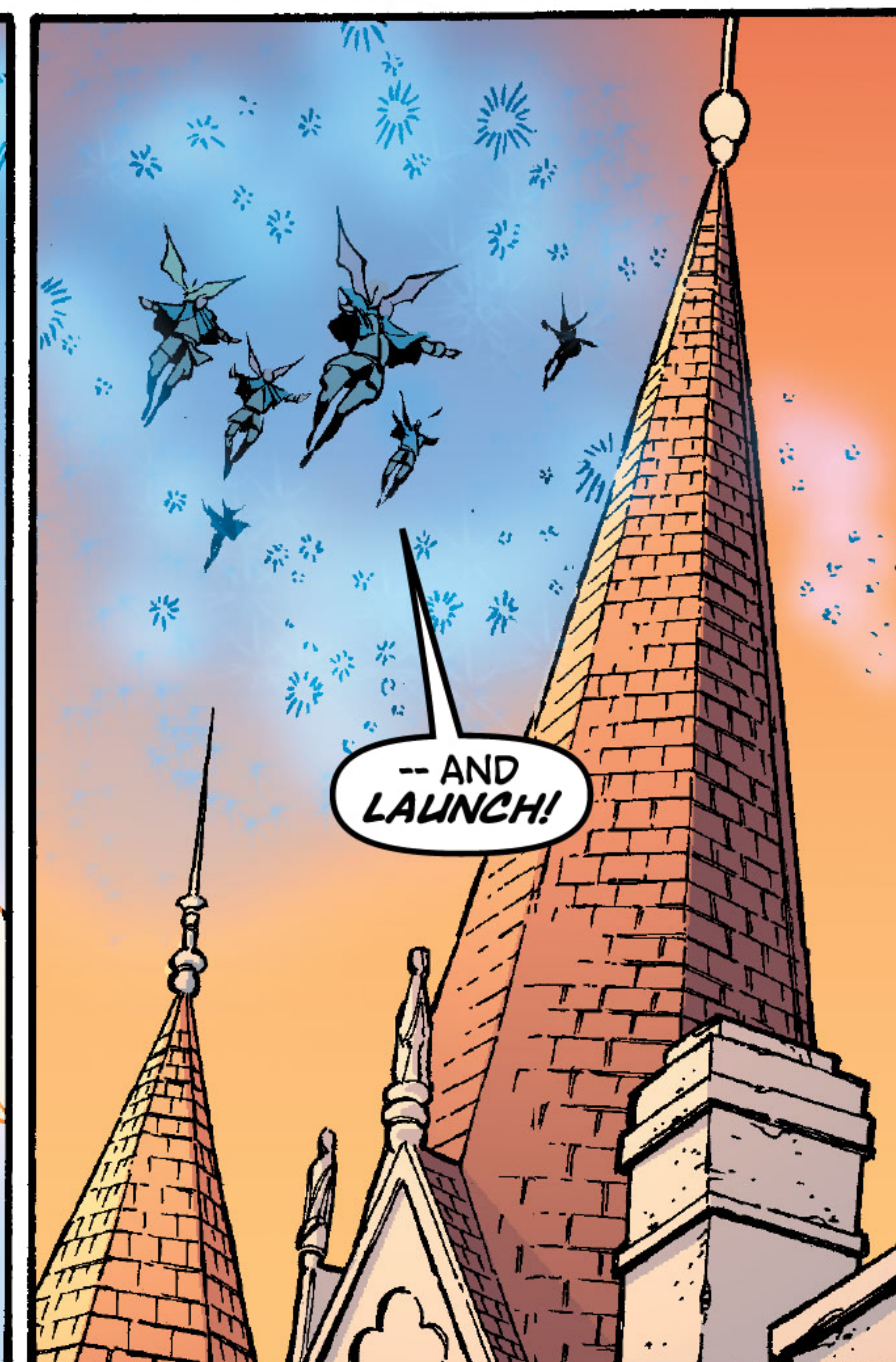
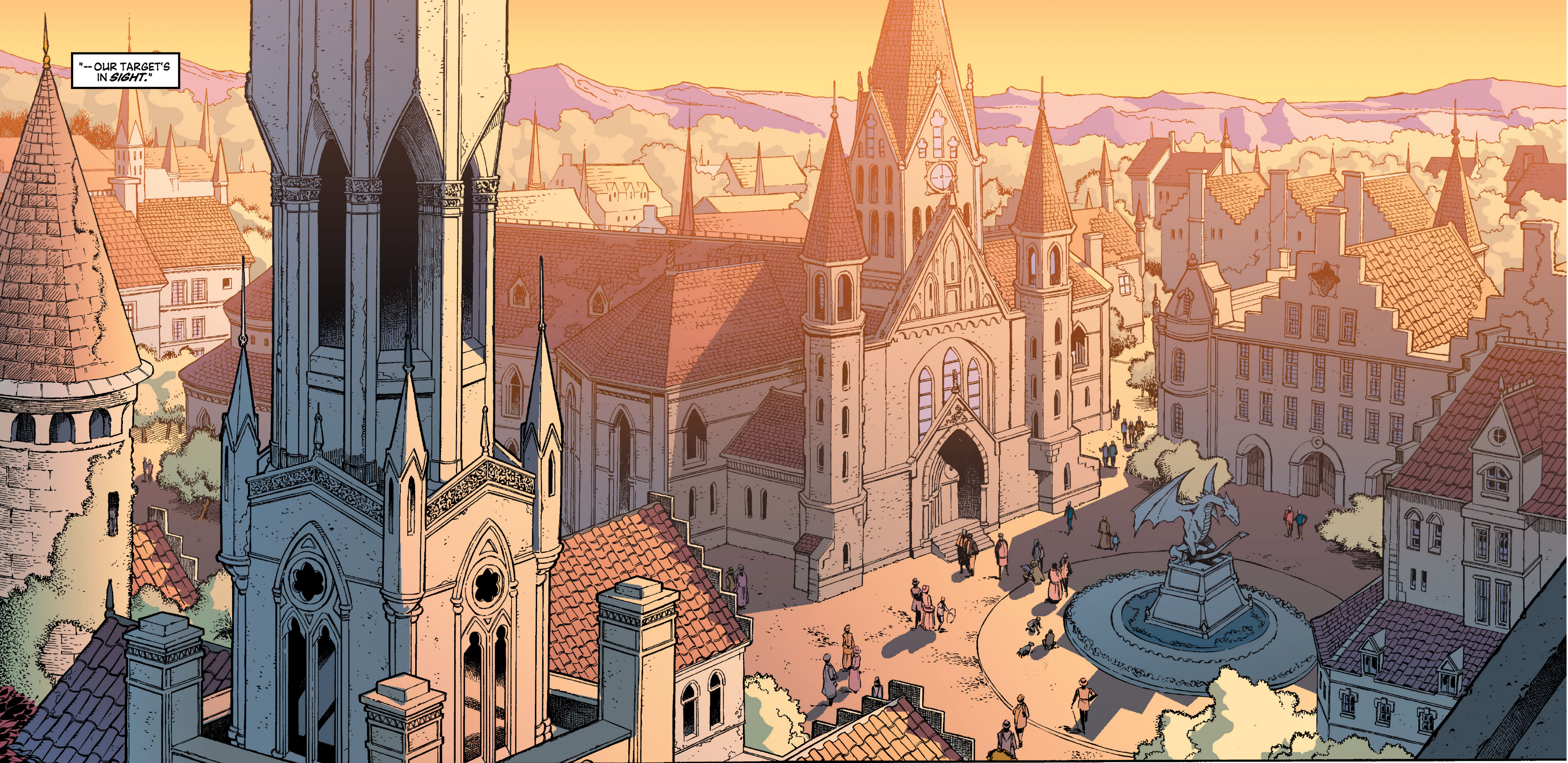
No, I'm getting
ahead of myself.
We flew into northwest
Prussia, into Lower
Saxony, staying low...

SO WHAT
ARE THESE THINGS,
ANYWAY? SOME SORT
OF **BOMBS**?

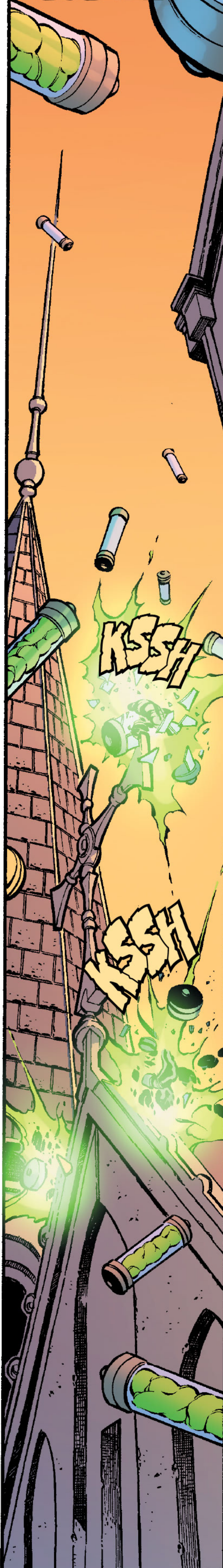
THE WAY
THEY'RE **MOVING
AROUND** IN THE JARS,
I'D **SWEAR** THEY'RE
ALMOST --

BE **QUIET**,
LOGAN. THE CLOAKING
SPELL KEEPS US FROM
BEING **SEEN**, UNDER MOST
CIRCUMSTANCES --
BUT WE **CAN**
BE HEARD.

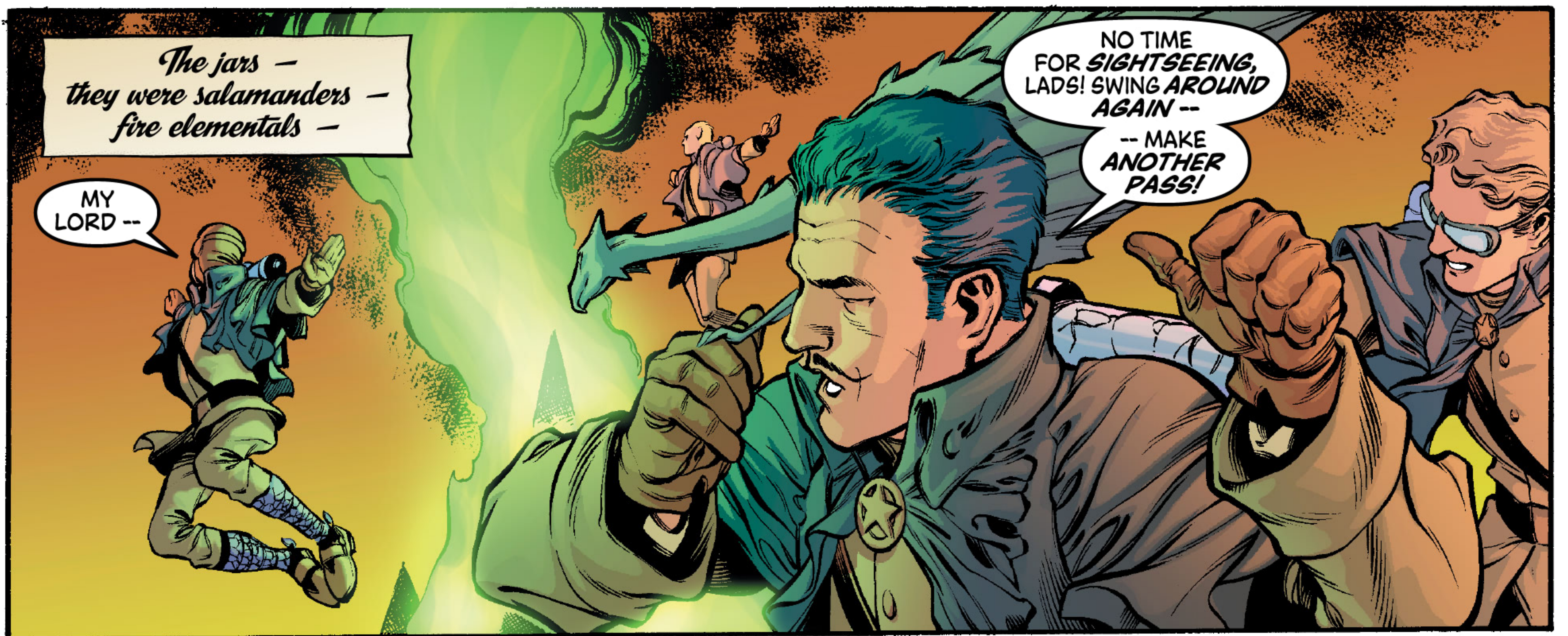
BESIDES --



— and when they hit —



OH MY GOD --





*It was a lucky shot that
got Goodheart —*

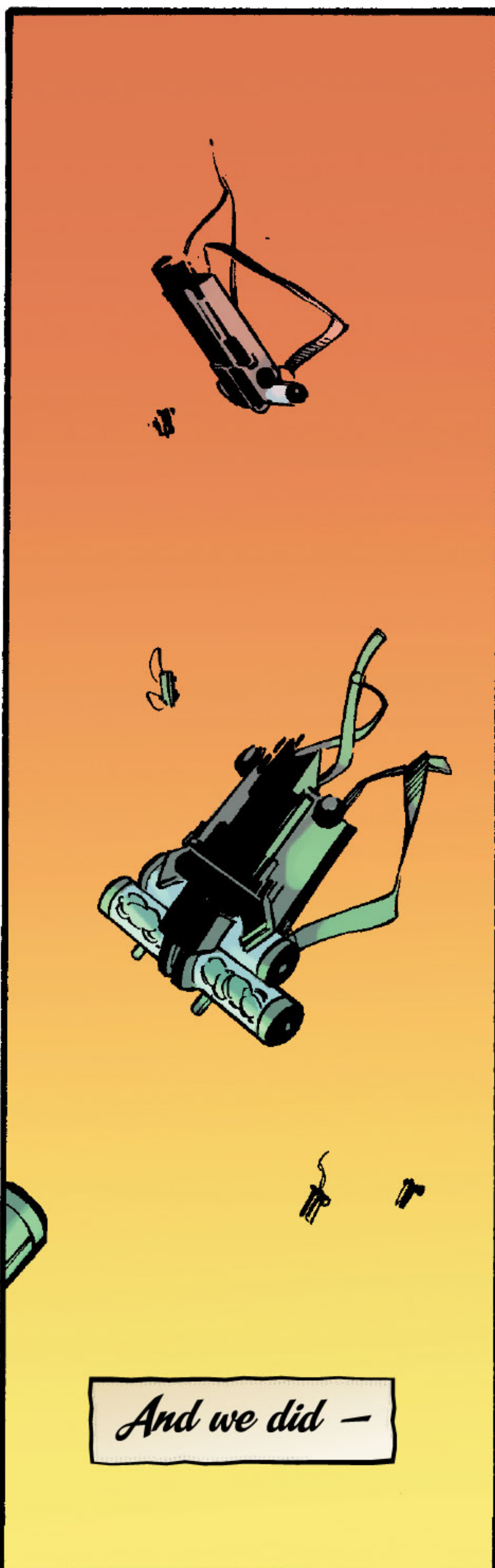
*But the flames
jumped —*

— and jumped —



**GET
RID OF
THEM!**

**GET RID
OF THE PACKS --
BEFORE YOU GO
UP, TOO!**



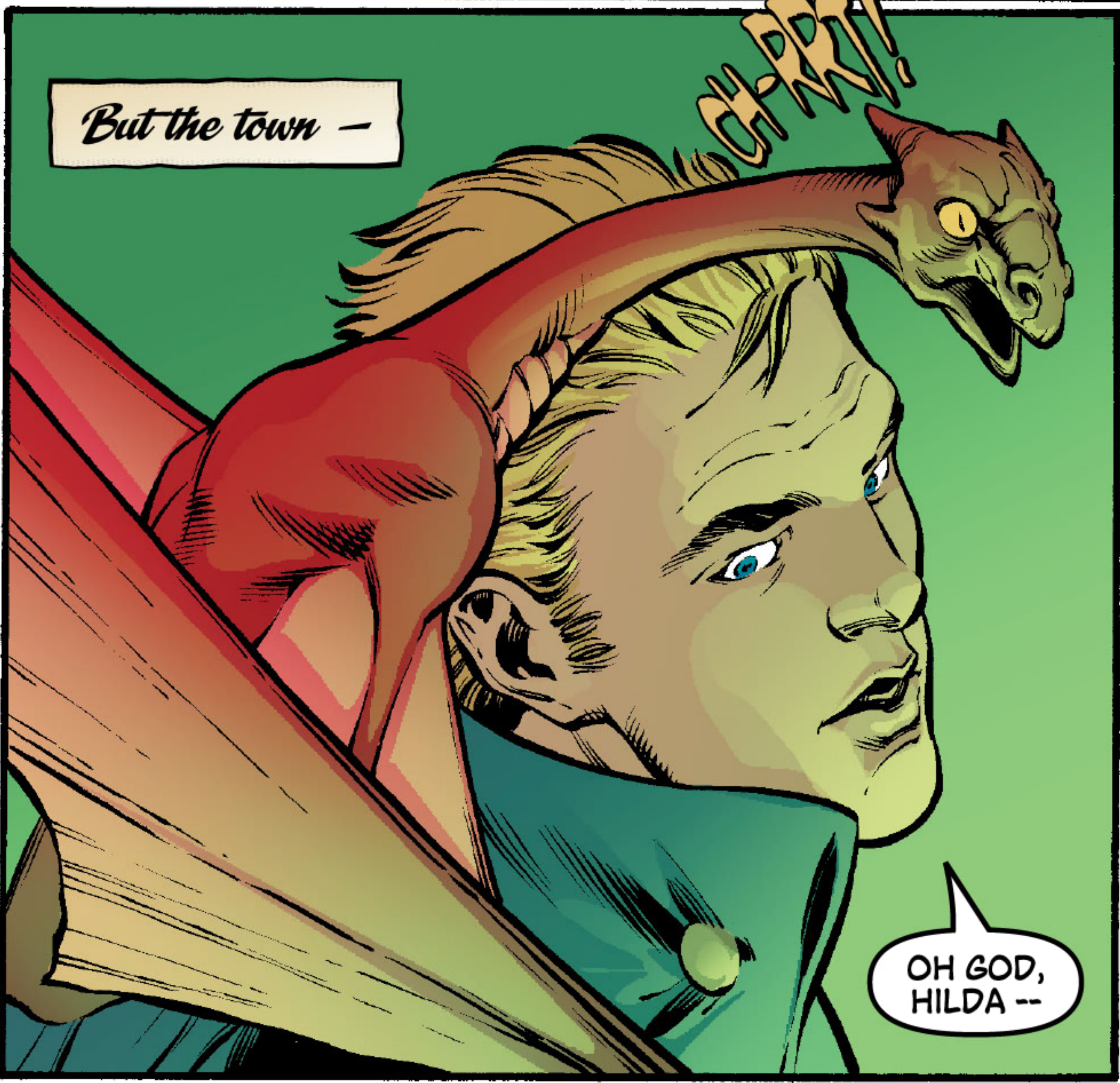
And we did —



And they fell —



*I dropped mine
on the church —
it was already
burning —*



But the town —

**OH GOD,
HILDA --**

*Logan was right.
It was a pretty town.*

Was.





*I tried to think —
what could I
do, how could
I stop this?*



*Maybe my crossbow
bolts could blast a
path through the
flames, give those
poor people a way
to safety. But —*

*HOLD ON,
KID! I'VE GOT
YOU — I'LL CARRY
YOU TO —*



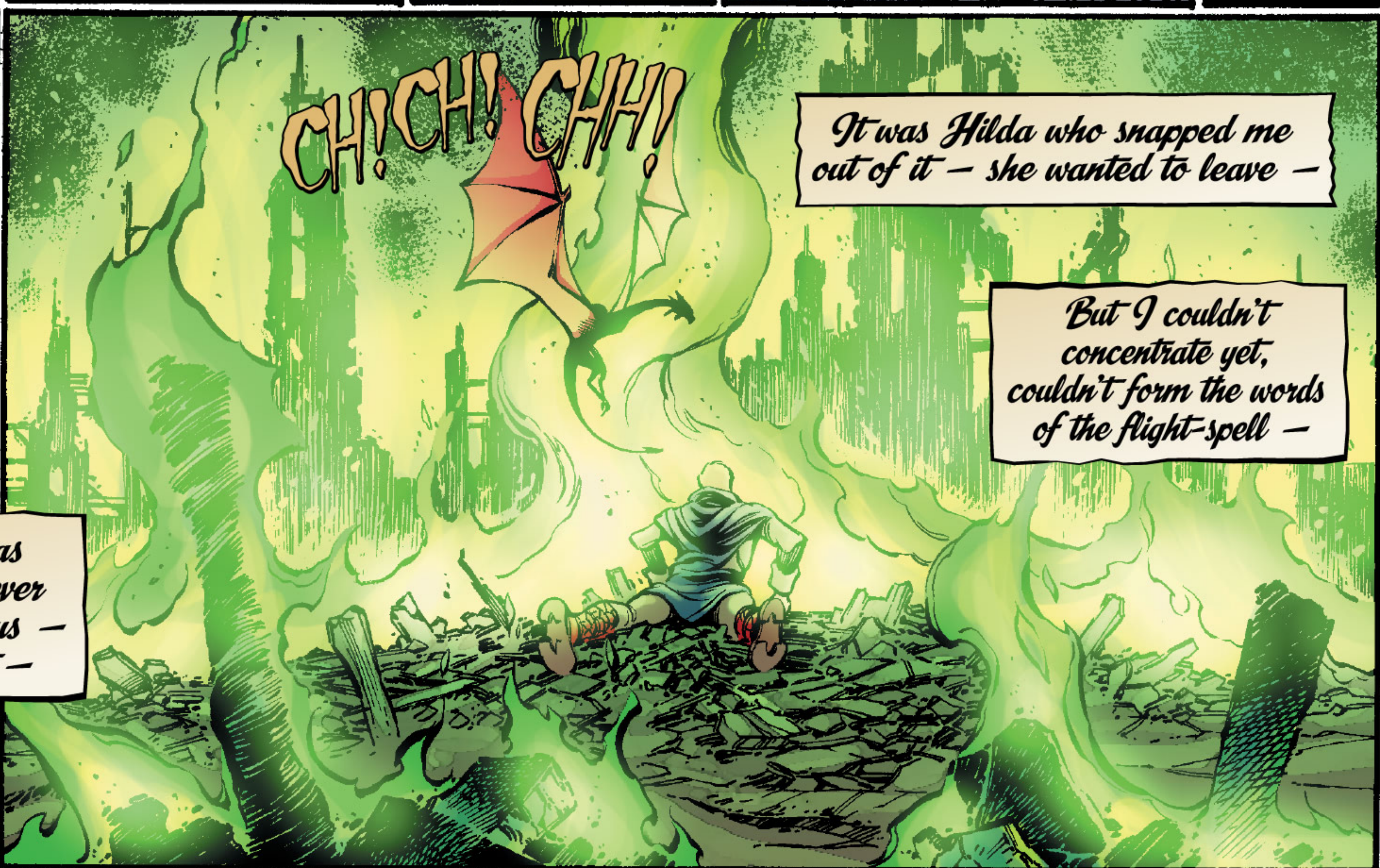
UHH!



*My head swam —
my vision blurred —*



*I think I was
just dazed, never
fully unconscious —
it was so hot —*



CH!CH! CHH!

*It was Hilda who snapped me
out of it — she wanted to leave —*

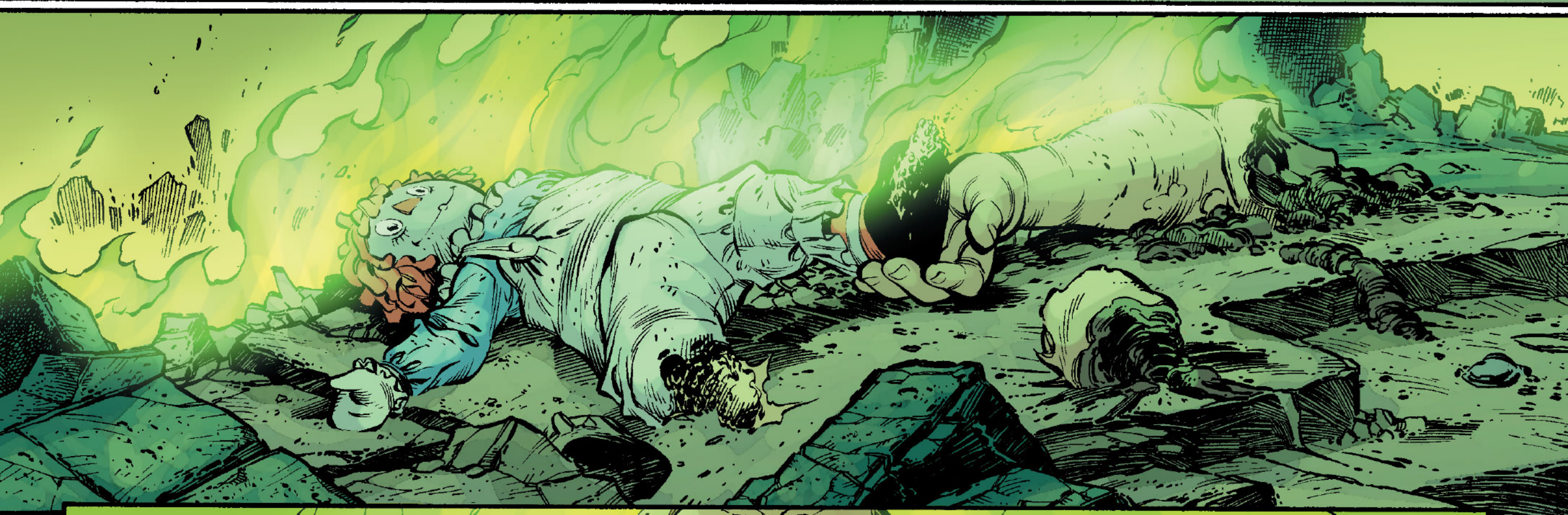
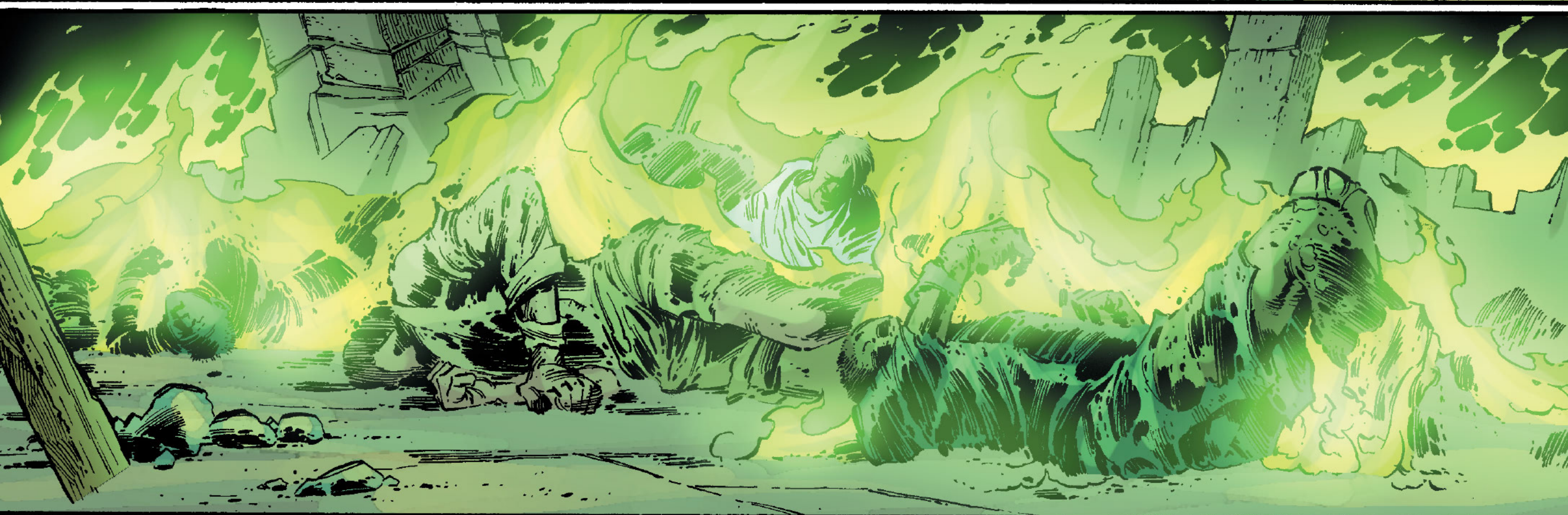
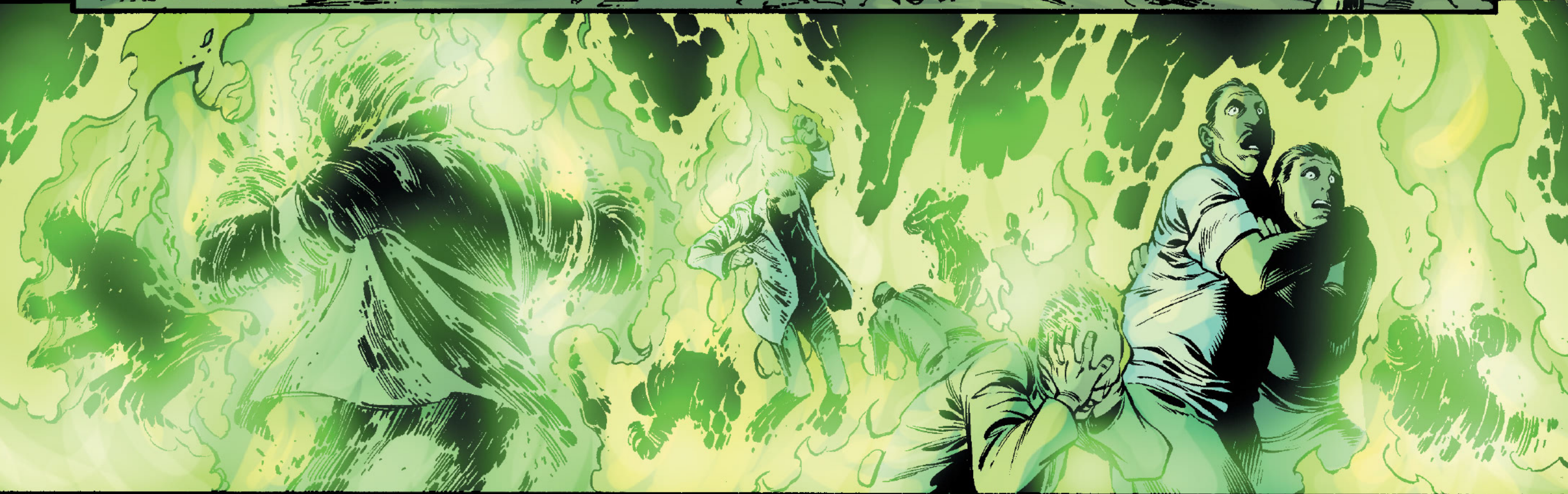
*But I couldn't
concentrate yet,
couldn't form the words
of the flight-spell —*

*I wondered — was this what
our wizards meant to happen?
Did things just get out of control?*

Did it make a difference?

*We were supposed to be the
good ones. The righteous ones.
The ones who didn't do things like this.
That's what they told us.*

But I saw —



And I saw —

OH DEAR
GOD --

I -- I HELPED
MAKE THIS HAPPEN.
I DID THIS --

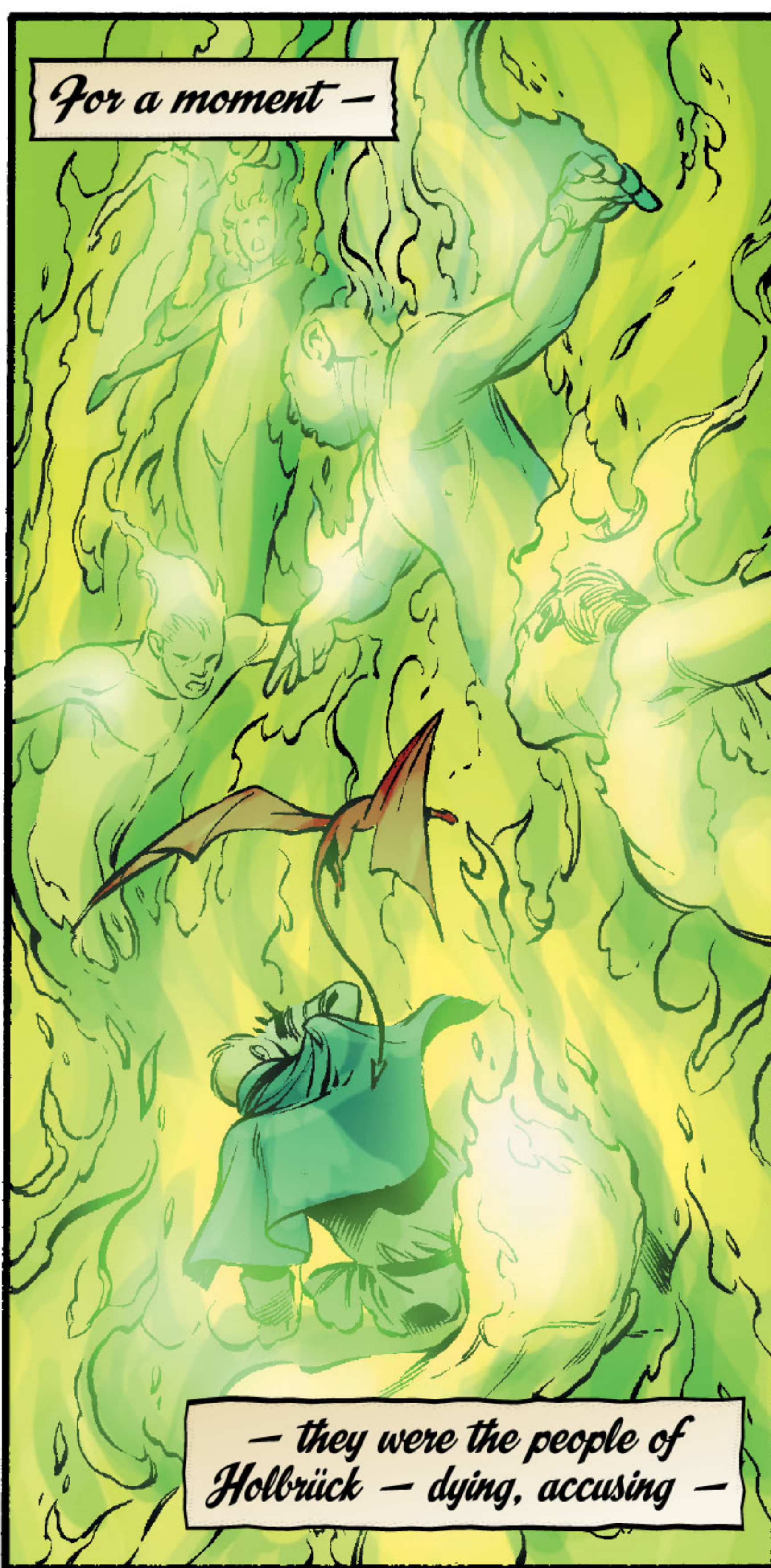




CH!
CH!
CH!

GO, HILDA --
FLY AWAY -- SAVE
YOURSELF --

The flames roared around me.
I couldn't think, couldn't breathe --
and I saw shadows, shapes --

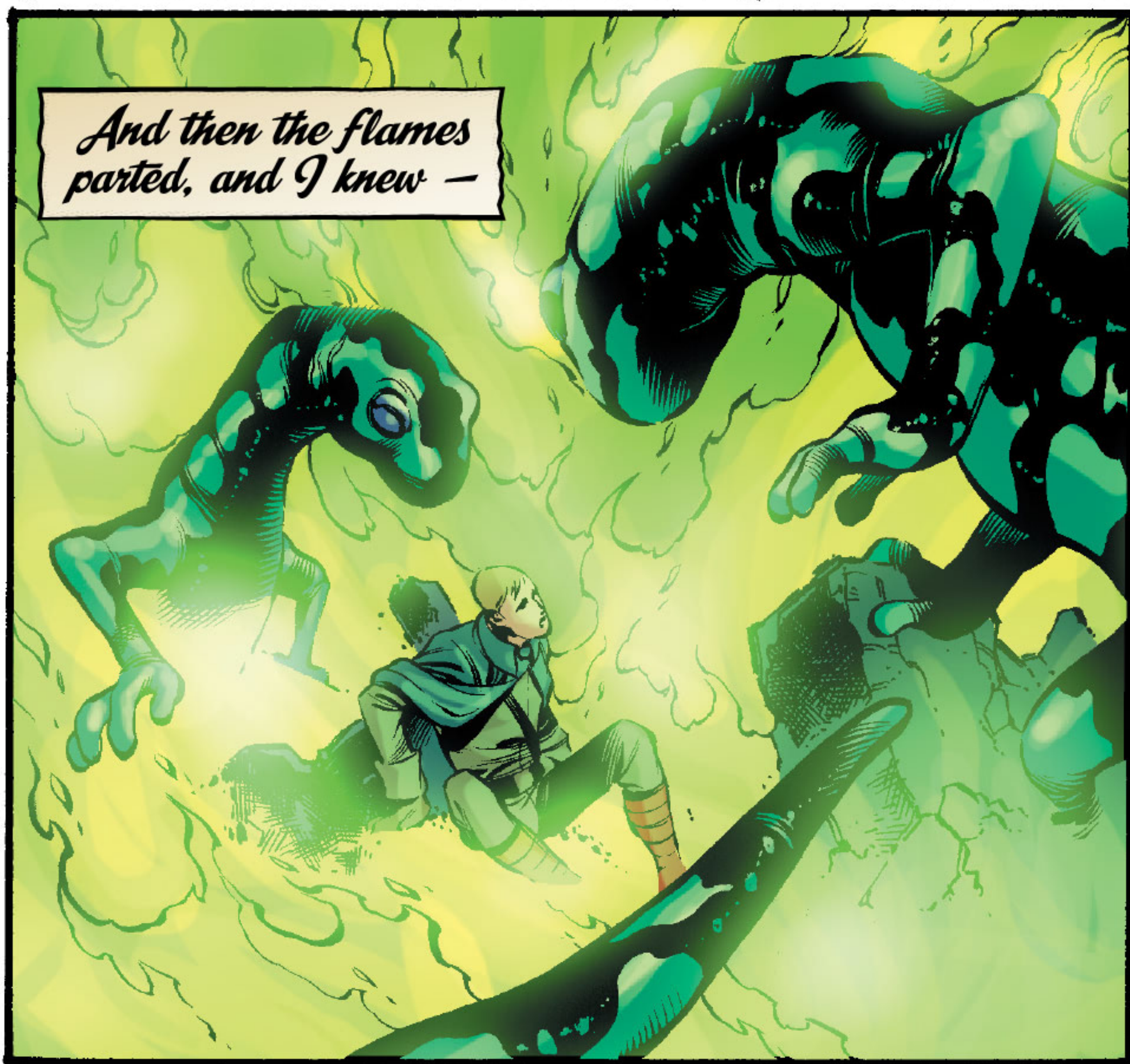


For a moment --

-- they were the people of
Holbrück -- dying, accusing --



Then laughing faces --
hungry faces --



And then the flames
parted, and I knew --



≡KOFF≡



-- knew I was going to die --

AAAHH!



HHHH?

HH!

COME ON,
LAD!

THIS IS
NO TIME FOR A
NAP! FLY!

FLY!



BLAST IT,
YOUR *DRAGON'S* HERE,
YOU'RE *CONSCIOUS* --
I SAID *FLY*, DAMN
YOU!

CH!
CH!

*My lungs felt seared --
my face hurt so much --*

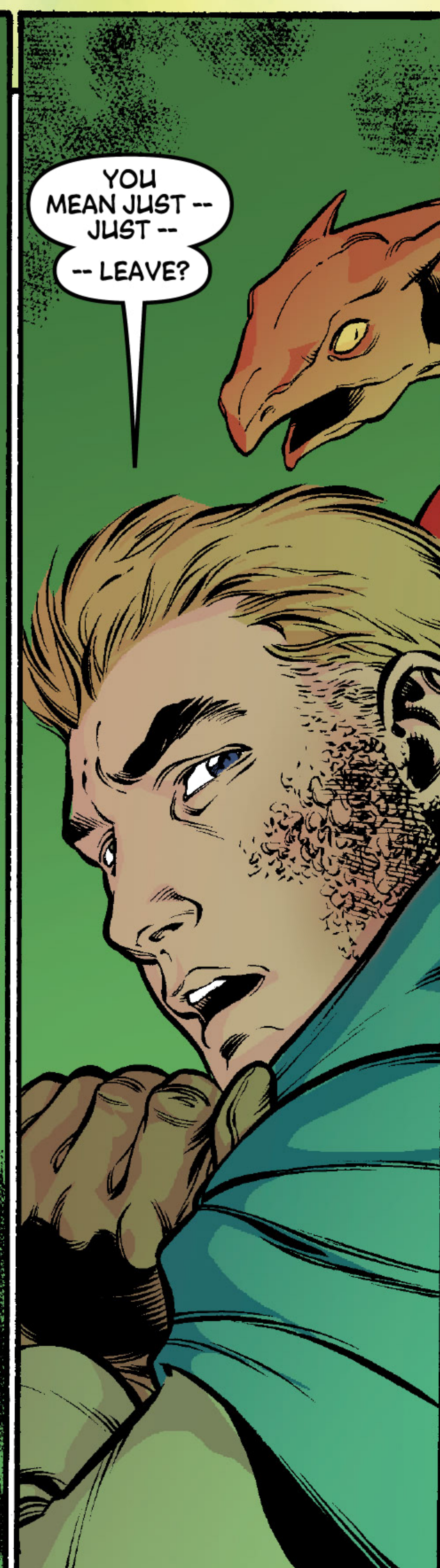


*But I remembered
the words, the thoughts,
the gestures --*

AVEUS
DRACONUS



THERE!
GOOD! NOW
LET'S GO!



YOU
MEAN JUST --
JUST --
-- LEAVE?



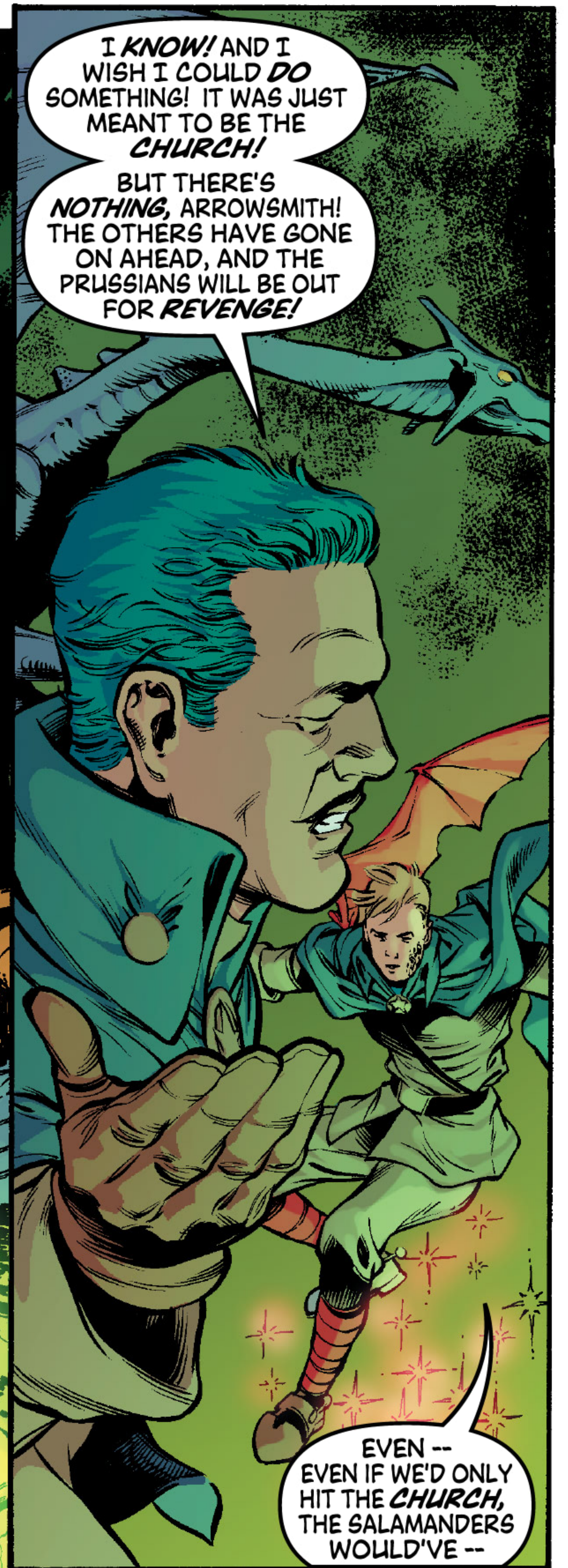
LEAVE...
THAT?

*I could still hear
screams, and the crack
of shattering glass.*

*And the smell — the smell
of woodsmoke, of the dyes
they used in the town's
weaving mills —*

*And under it all,
a smell like charred
pork —*

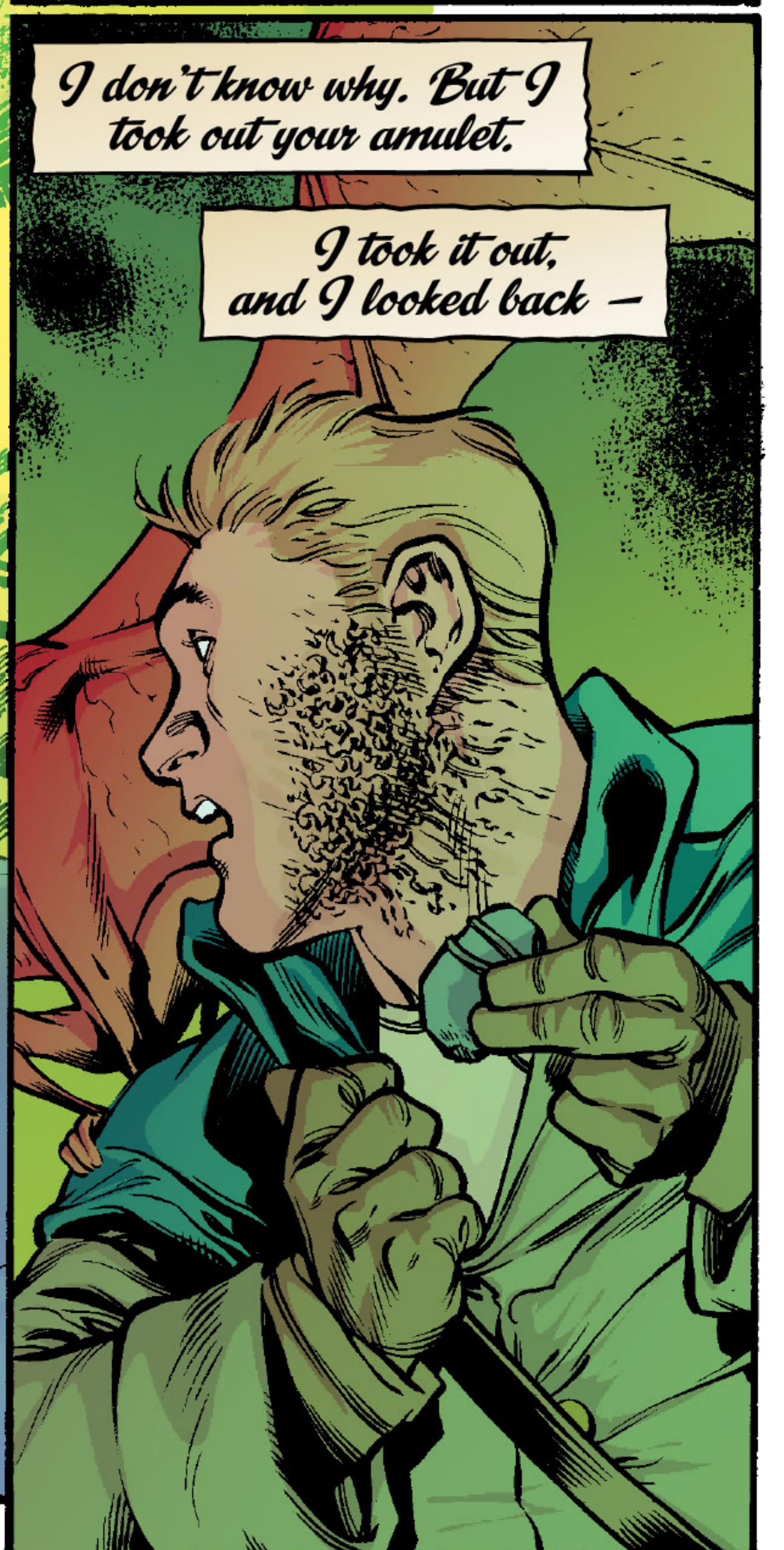
*There was a howling coming
from under the church —
I guess they were right about
that, at least, but —*



I KNOW! AND I
WISH I COULD DO
SOMETHING! IT WAS JUST
MEANT TO BE THE
CHURCH!

BUT THERE'S
NOTHING, ARROWSMITH!
THE OTHERS HAVE GONE
ON AHEAD, AND THE
PRUSSIANS WILL BE OUT
FOR **REVENGE!**

EVEN --
EVEN IF WE'D ONLY
HIT THE **CHURCH**,
THE SALAMANDERS
WOULD'VE --



*I don't know why. But I
took out your amulet.*

*I took it out,
and I looked back —*

*And the smoke —
it rose dark and thick,
rolling in on itself like
something solid —*

And in the smoke —

THE GODS!
ROCKY'S GODS --
THE GODS OF THE
NORTH!

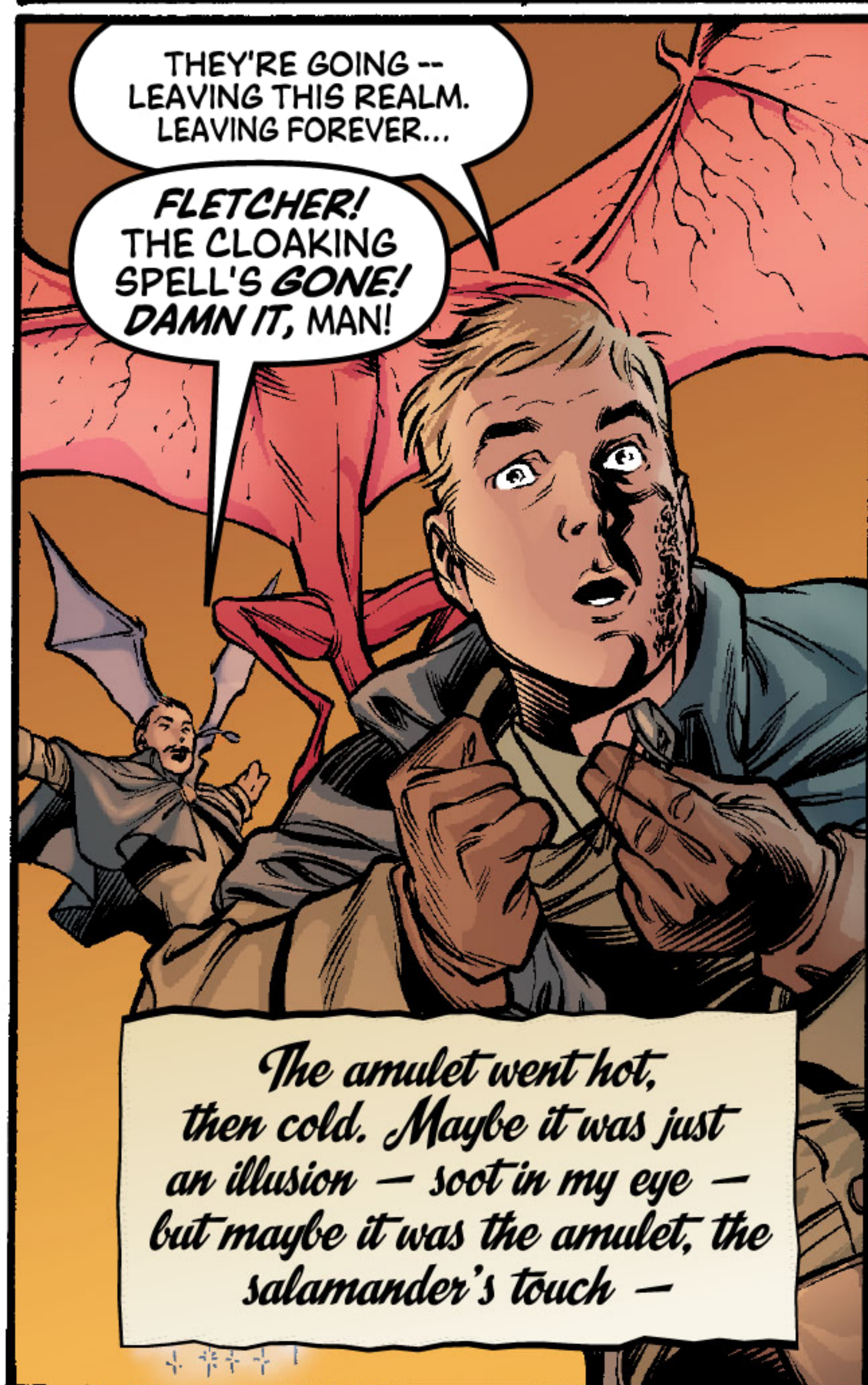
FOXES --
DO YOU SEE
THEM?

SEE WHO?
FLETCHER --



*They weren't what
had been in that church.
I knew that.*

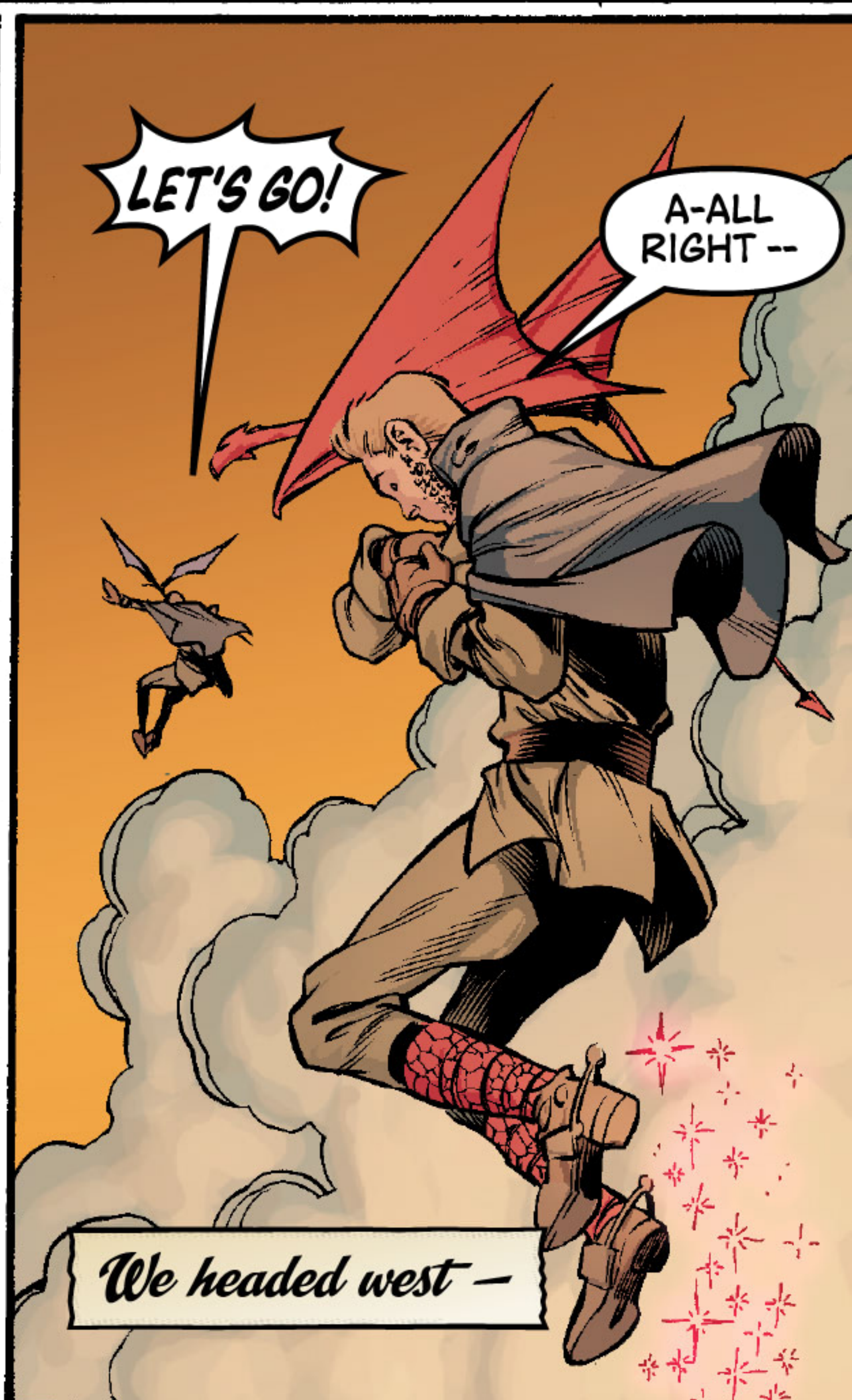
*They looked — they looked
wise and old and terribly,
terribly sad, all at the same
time. And they turned,
and I knew —*



THEY'RE GOING --
LEAVING THIS REALM.
LEAVING FOREVER...

FLETCHER!
THE CLOAKING
SPELL'S GONE!
DAMN IT, MAN!

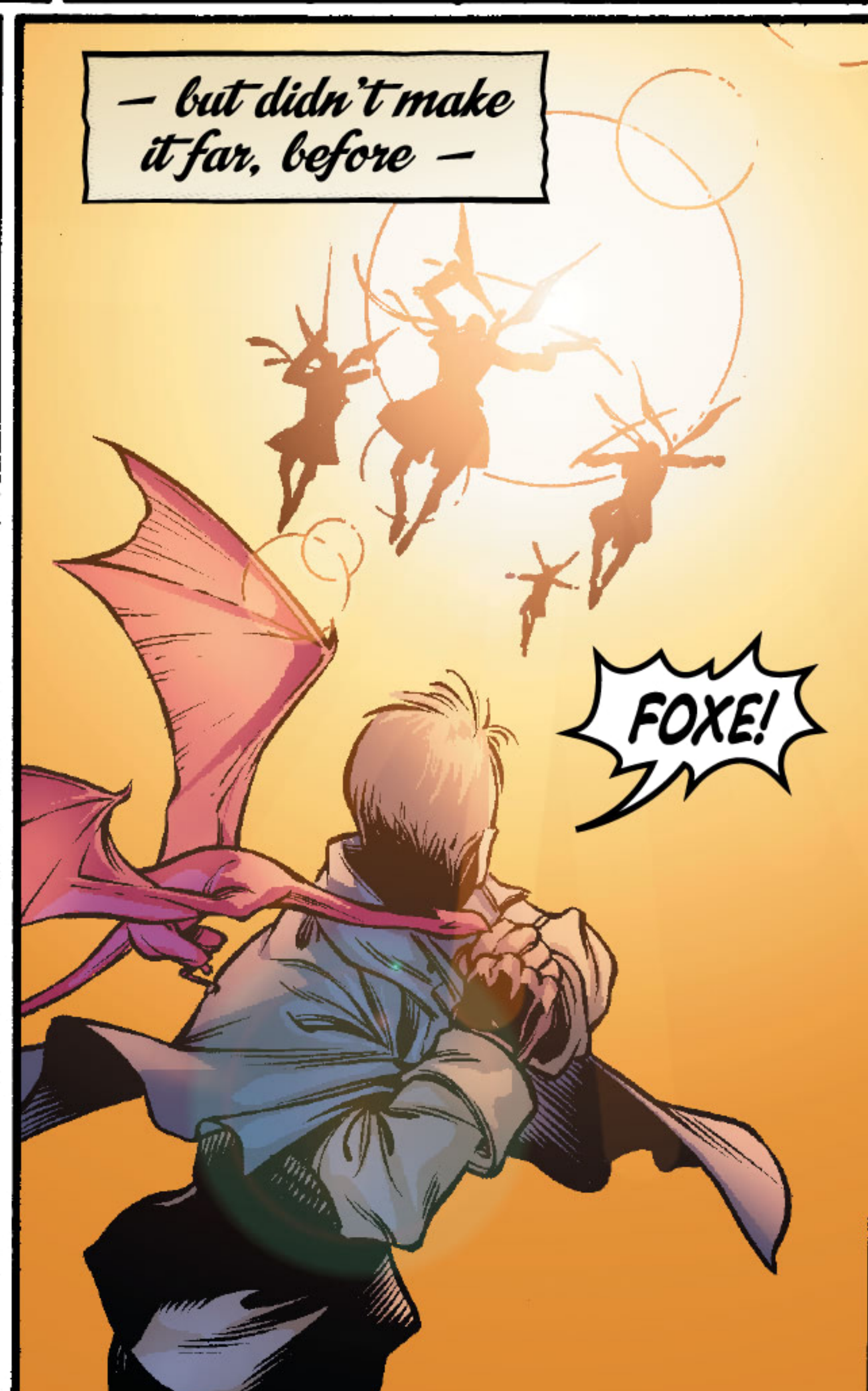
*The amulet went hot,
then cold. Maybe it was just
an illusion — soot in my eye —
but maybe it was the amulet, the
salamander's touch —*



LET'S GO!

A-ALL
RIGHT --

We headed west —



*— but didn't make
it far, before —*

FOXIE!



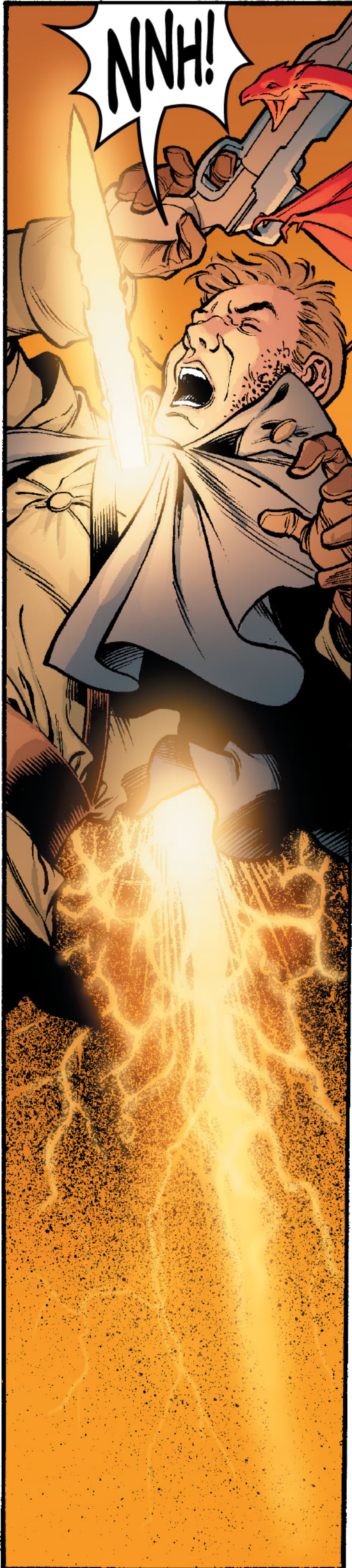
PRUSSIANS,
EH? I *KNEW* IT!

BREAK OFF,
FLETCHER -- YOU'RE
IN NO SHAPE TO *FIGHT*!
HEAD *WEST* -- I'LL HOLD
THEM OFF, THEN LEAD
THEM A MERRY --

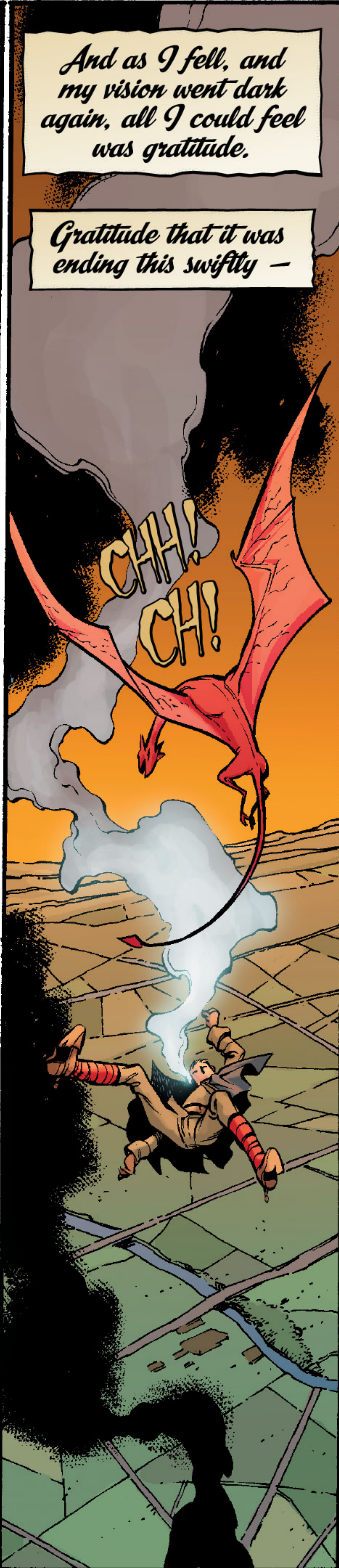
NO --
NO, I CAN --



*But I couldn't.
I was still too shaky.
I moved too slowly, too
sluggishly, almost like
I was asleep. One of
them flashed by me --*



NNH!



*And as I fell, and
my vision went dark
again, all I could feel
was gratitude.*

*Gratitude that it was
ending this swiftly --*



*-- when for what
I'd done, I deserved
so much worse --*





CHAPTER SIX

Tomorrow's
Dawn

Near Rethel, Gallia.
October 1915

Letter from Lt. Fletcher B. Arrowsmith,
Overseas Aero Corps to
P.F.C. Rakhmatalikhin "Rocky" Tok
(approx., see "rock-troll" listings,
14th Lotharingian Inf. Undelivered.

OFFICE OF THE
MAIL CENSOR
NOT APPROVED
Do NOT Send On

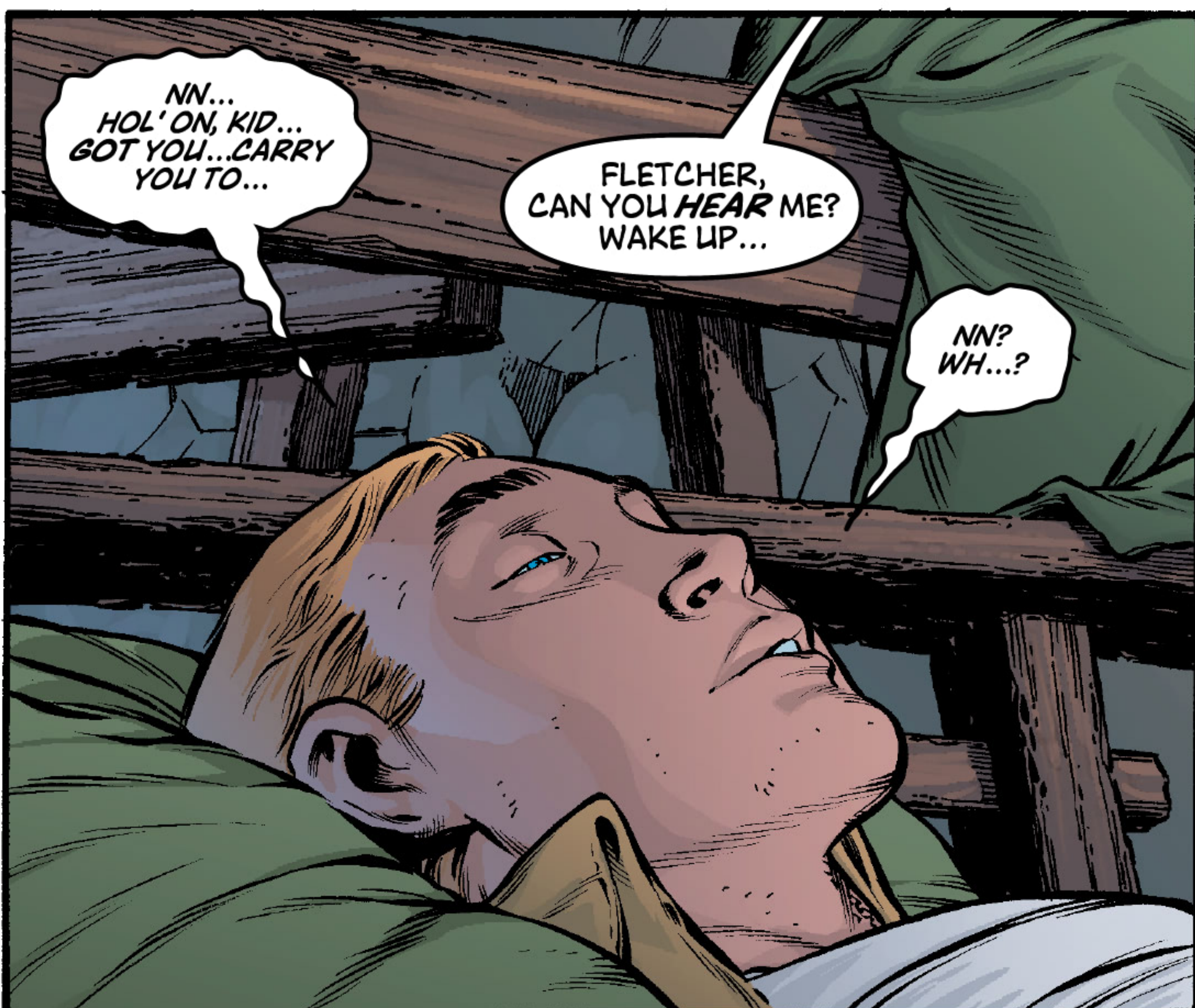
I thought I was in hell.

BY: *W. G. & A. G.*
All I could see were the people
of Holbrück — their faces, their
charred flesh — their eyes,
accusing me.

And the flames all around,
reaching out for me as well.
And I tried to get away,
but I couldn't —
I knew I didn't deserve to —

And in the flames, those inhuman
beasts, calling my name —
over and over, calling my name —

FLETCHER?



NN...
HOL' ON, KID...
GOT YOU... CARRY
YOU TO...

FLETCHER,
CAN YOU **HEAR** ME?
WAKE UP...

NN?
WH...?



FLETCHER?



*I had a panicky moment when I saw her face —
yours too, Rocky. I was damned, I could accept
that, I'd earned it. But the two of you?*

*Then the world stopped
being blurry, and my
chest just hurt...*

GRACE?
ROCKY?

WHA...
WHAT'S GOING
ON? HOW DID
WE...?

EASY,
FLETCHER.
YOU'RE GOING
TO BE ALL
RIGHT.



HERE. TRY
SOME SOUP,
IT'LL **WARM**
YOU.

YOU WERE
WOUNDED. OUR
MAGE HEALED THE
WORST OF IT, BUT
YOU'LL STILL NEED
TIME FOR YOUR **RIBS**
AND **LUNGS** TO
FULLY KNIT.

IF **CAPTAIN
FOX**E HADN'T
GOTTEN YOU HERE,
THOUGH...



F-FOX?!
HE -- I --

I looked at him —



— but in his eyes —
he was seeing what
I was seeing, I think.

He looked
away.

WHOA DERE,
VLECH-BOY. IS
GOOD TO SEE YOU,
BUT YOU GOT TO
LIE DOWN,
REST.

NO...I'M OKAY,
I CAN **STAND**. I'M
JUST...I'M STIFF. I
NEED TO **STRETCH**,
TO WALK...

OGAY,
DEN...

...I SHOW
YOU AROUN'.



WE ABOUT **EIGHT MILE** BEHIND PRUSSIAN LINES. WE WAS ON DIS SORTIE, AN' DE PRUSSAINS GO **BERSERK**, ATTACKIN' EVERYWHERE, LIKE DE MADMEN.

SOME CRUD ABOUT US BURNIN' A **WHOLE TOWN**, DEY SAY...

...JUS' SOME OF DAT **PROPAGANDA** STUFF, I BET.

ANYWAY, WE GET CUT OFF WHEN GRACE AN' HER **AMBULANCE** SHOW UP, AN' WE VIND PLACE TO HIDE **HERE**...



...AND DE OFFICERS DEY SAY WE DON'T RISK MOVIN' 'TIL **DAWN**. GOOD T'ING, TOO, 'CAUSE DAT VOXE HE BARELY **MAKE** IT HERE, YOU KNOW?

IF HE TRY TO GO DE **WHOLE WAY**...

UH, **ROCKY**...



HEY, HERE SOME OF DE **GUYS**! DIS IS **HENRIK ROOSENDAAL** -- HE A LOT'ARINGIAN VELLA FROM **UTRECHT**.

'ALLO.

DIS HERE IS **WILLOWBARK**. HE A DRYAD, UP FROM **TUSCANY**. WHAT HE DOIN' WIT' US, I DUNNO.

BUONA SERA, YOUNG SIR.

AN' HERE DE COMPANY MAGE DAT **HEAL** YOU, **LUCIEN CASTEAU**. HE CHUST A KID -- **SOUS-LOOT'NANT** -- BUT WE LIKE HIM OGAY **ANYWAY**.

IT IS GOOD TO SEE YOU **HEALING** WELL, **LIEUTENANT ARROWSMITH**. **GREETINGS**.



UH... AH...

...HI.

I didn't know what to say to them -- to any of them --



-- LOOKIN' FORWARD TO THE WAR BEIN' OVER, YAH. BACK TO ME OLD LIFE. THEY PUT OUT THE MILK, YOU FIX THE SHOES, YOU GET THE MILK.

A FAIR *TRADE* IT IS, AN' HONEST WORK. *THERE* YOU GO, DARLIN'...

AND...IT'S SOMETHING YOU *ENJOY*, RAKO?

YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO DO ANYTHING ELSE?



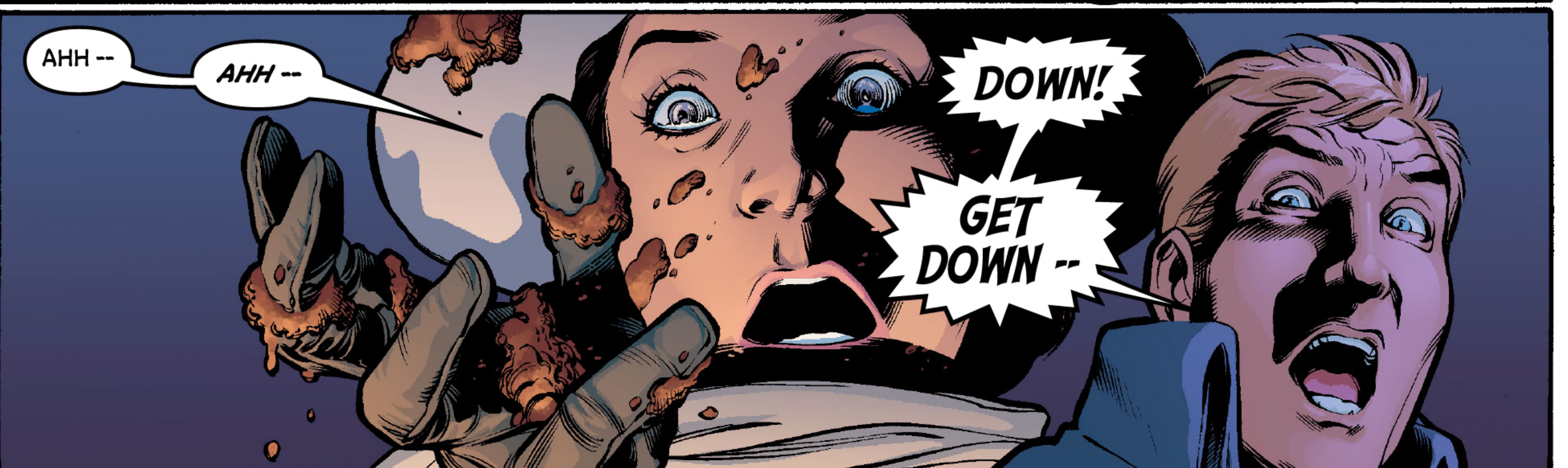
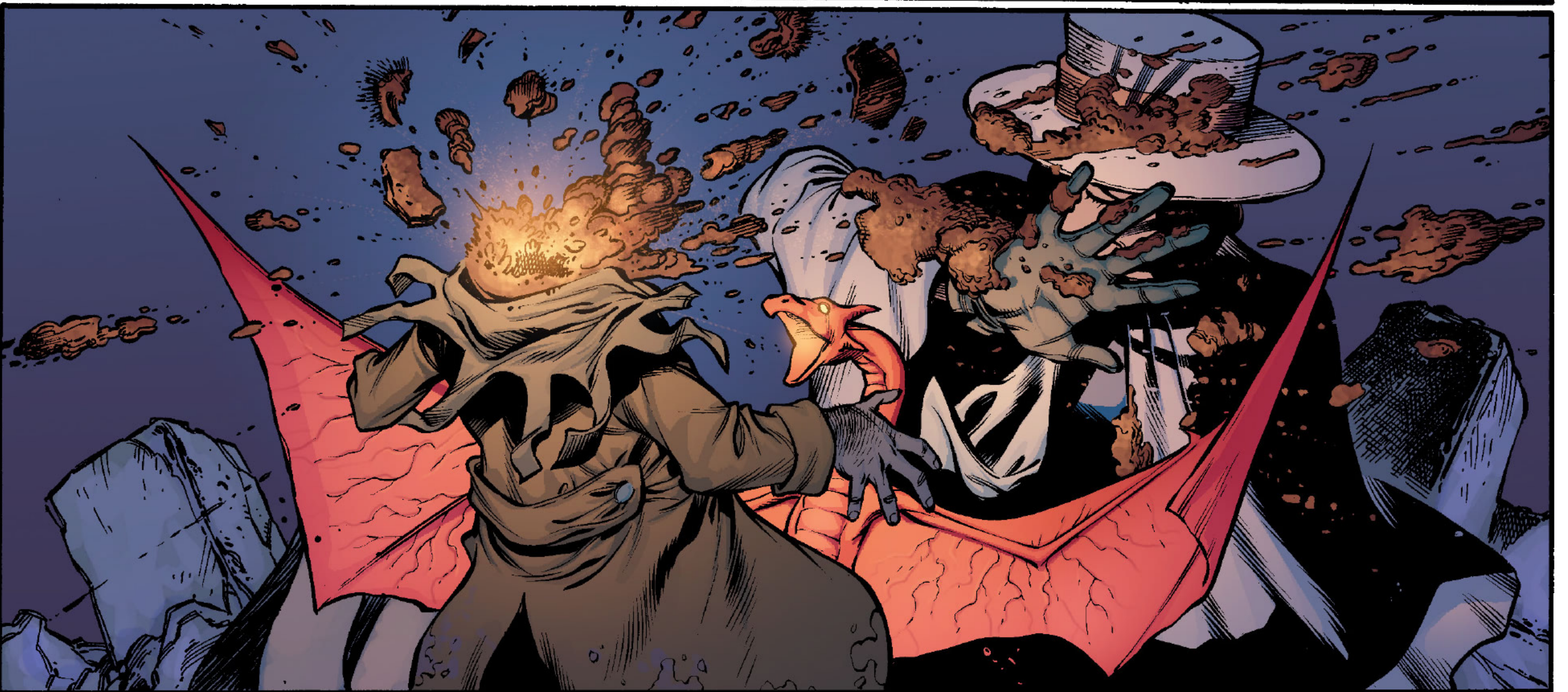
WELL, IT'S THE WAY IT *WORKS*, INNIT? 'SWHAT MY PA DID, AN' HIS PA BEFORE.

MIND YOU, I GOT MY EYE ON NEW *TERRITORY* WHEN I GET BACK. THEY'RE *BUILDIN'*. MORE HOUSES MEANS MORE *SHOES*. MORE *SHOES*, MORE *MILK*.

JUST THE THING TO START A *FAMILY* ON, YAH?



AN' THERE'S THIS REDCAP *LASSIE* I KNOW, THE SWEETEST YOU'LL --



AHH --

AHH --

DOWN!

GET DOWN --

**"--WE'RE
UNDER
ATTACK!"**





**AT 'EM,
BOYS!**

**FOR GALLIA
AND FREEDOM!
LOOK LIVELY!**

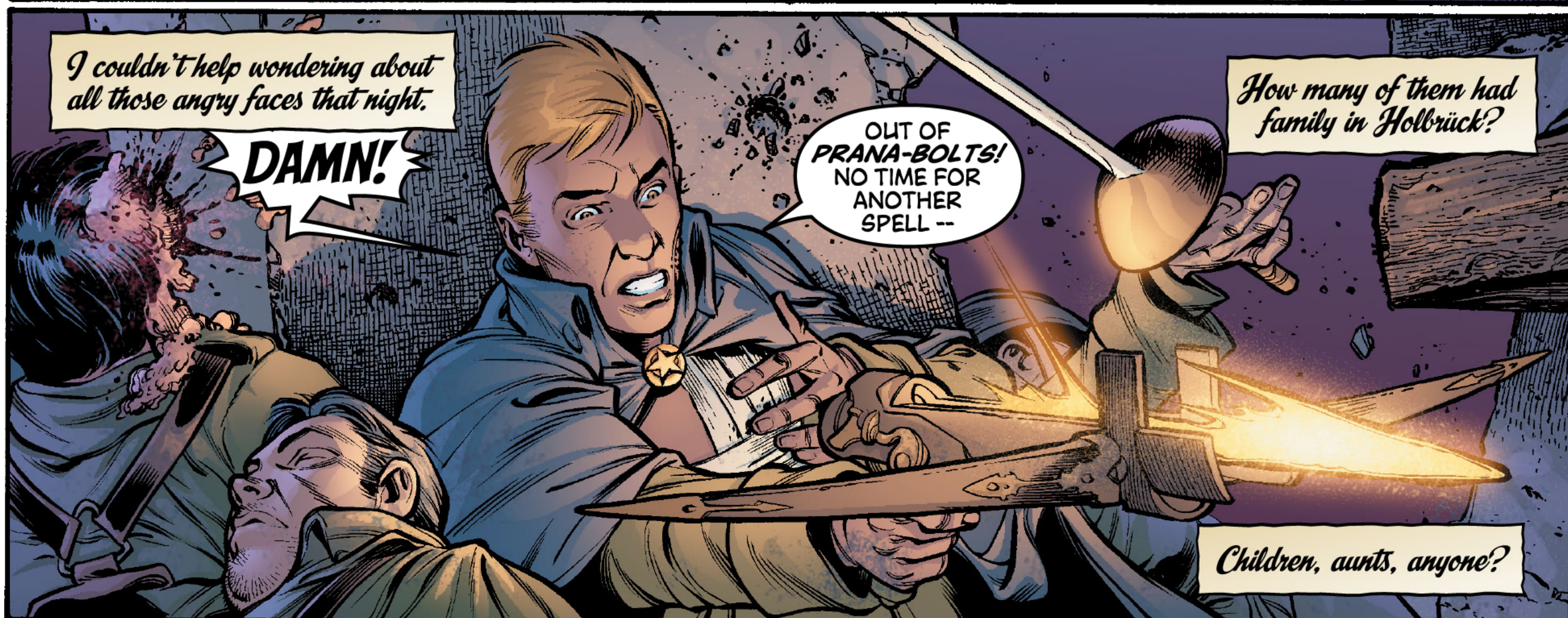


The battle — you know what it was like, of course. You were there. But it was new to me. Until then, I'd only fought in the air, in flight —

— and there's something about that, for all the chaos. Something more... I don't know.

Fair. Personal.

And then there'd been Holbrück.



I couldn't help wondering about all those angry faces that night.

DAMN!

**OUT OF
PRANA-BOLTS!
NO TIME FOR
ANOTHER
SPELL --**

How many of them had family in Holbrück?

Children, aunts, anyone?



That didn't stop me fighting, of course —

NNUH!

AHH!

AHH!

WH --?

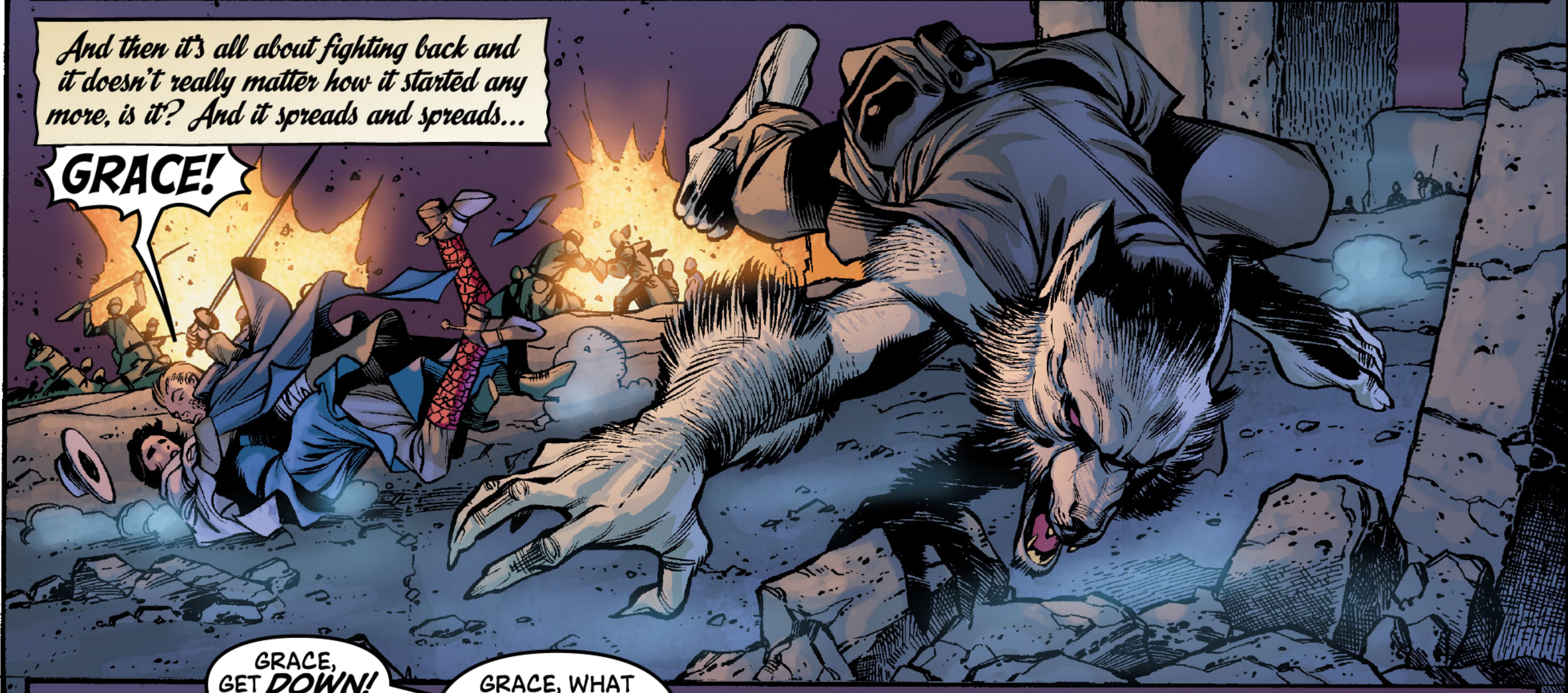
AHH!



We just -- that's what we do, isn't it? They attack. We fight back. They fight back.

And then it's all about fighting back and it doesn't really matter how it started any more, is it? And it spreads and spreads...

GRACE!



GRACE, GET **DOWN!** YOU'RE --

GRACE, WHAT ARE YOU **DOING?!** THAT WEREWOLF -- HE COULD HAVE **KILLED YOU!**

GRACE, YOU'RE IN THE **AMBULANCE CORPS!** YOU'RE A **NON-COMBATANT!** YOU'RE NOT **TRAINED**, YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO --

THEY KILLED -- THEY JUST -- HIS FACE, HIS **HEAD** --

HE ONLY -- HE ONLY WANTED MORE **SHOES** TO FIX -- !

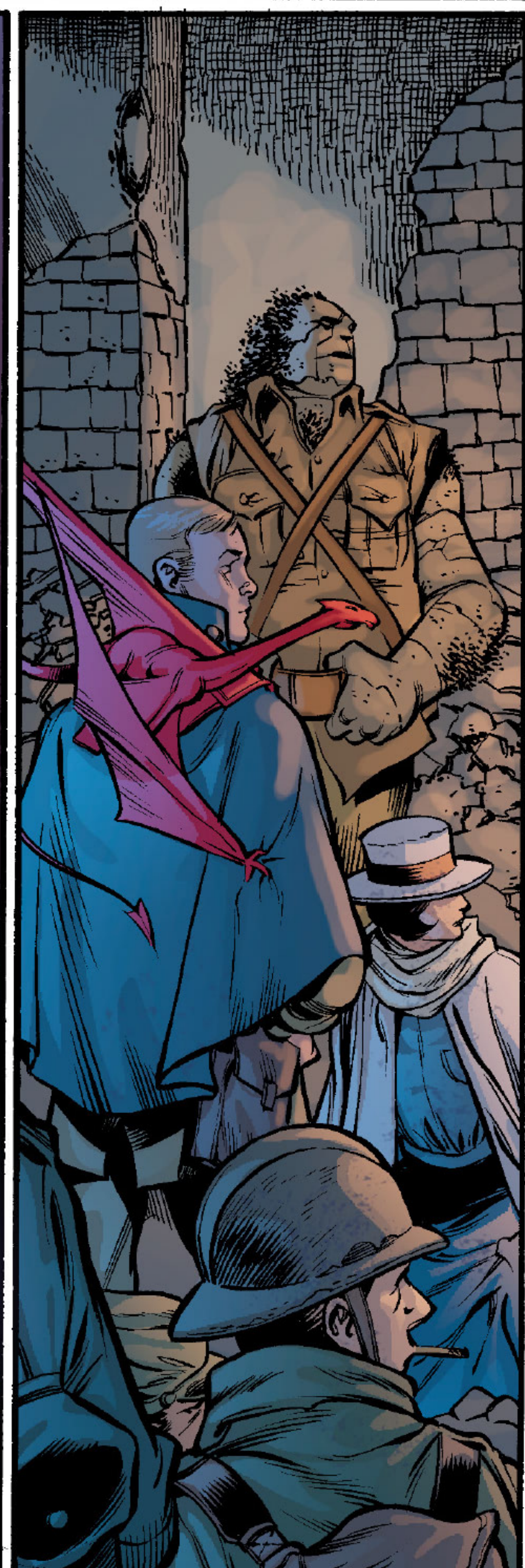
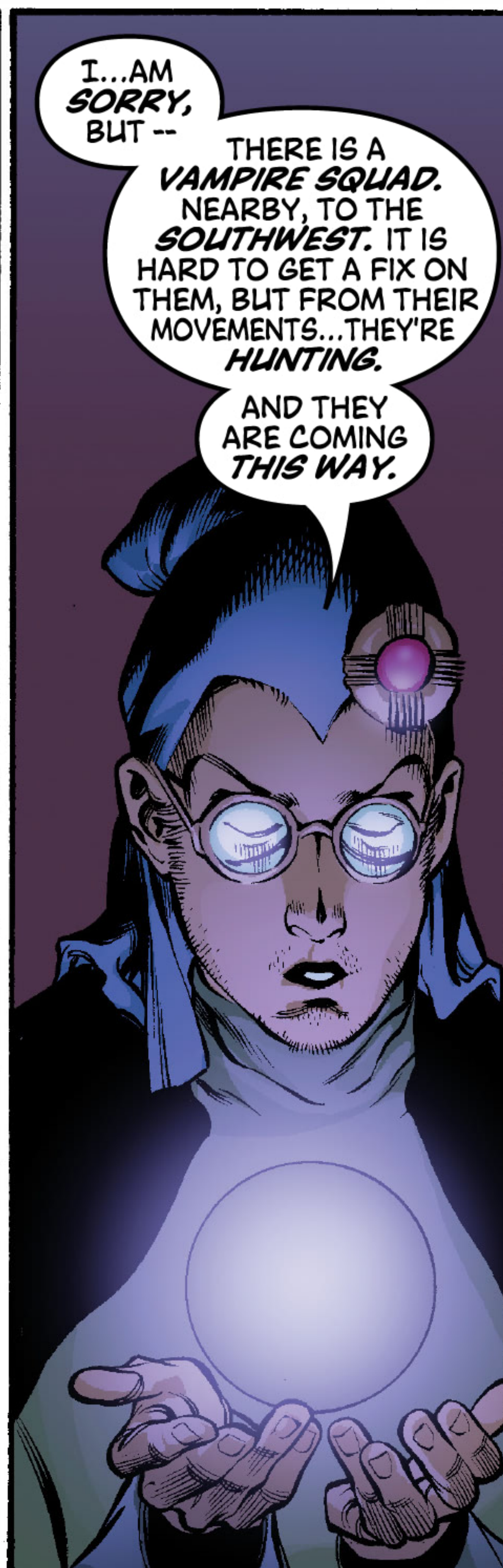
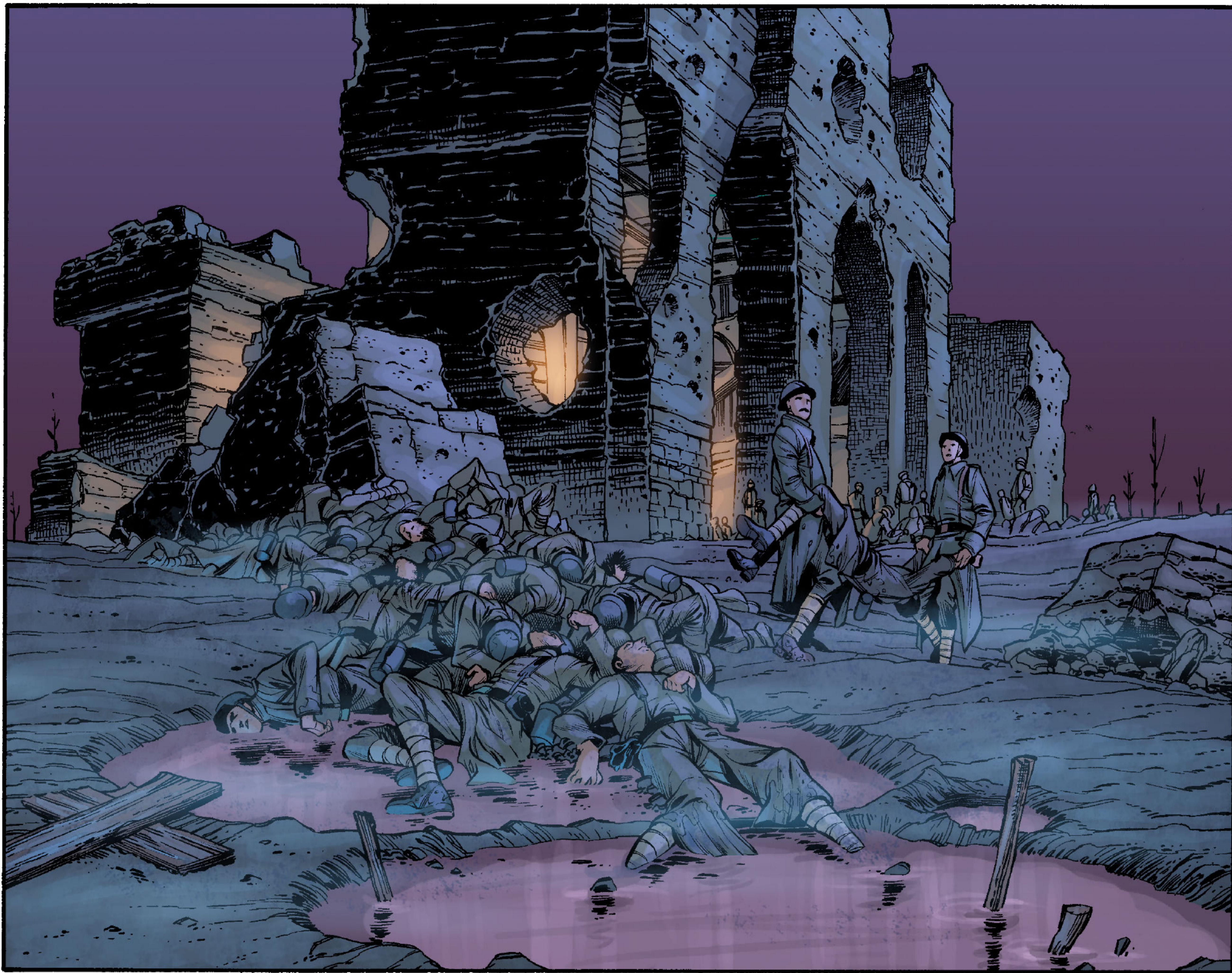
GET SOME **COVER!** AND **STAY** THERE, UNTIL THIS IS --



-- OH.

I GUESS... IT'S OVER.







YOU HAVE ALL FOUGHT **BRAVELY** AND WELL. BUT WE CANNOT WITHSTAND ANOTHER **ATTACK** TONIGHT. NOT BY **VAMPIRES**.

THEY NEED TO BE DECEYD -- LED **AWAY** FROM OUR POSITION, AND SWIFTLY.

I'LL GO NOW.

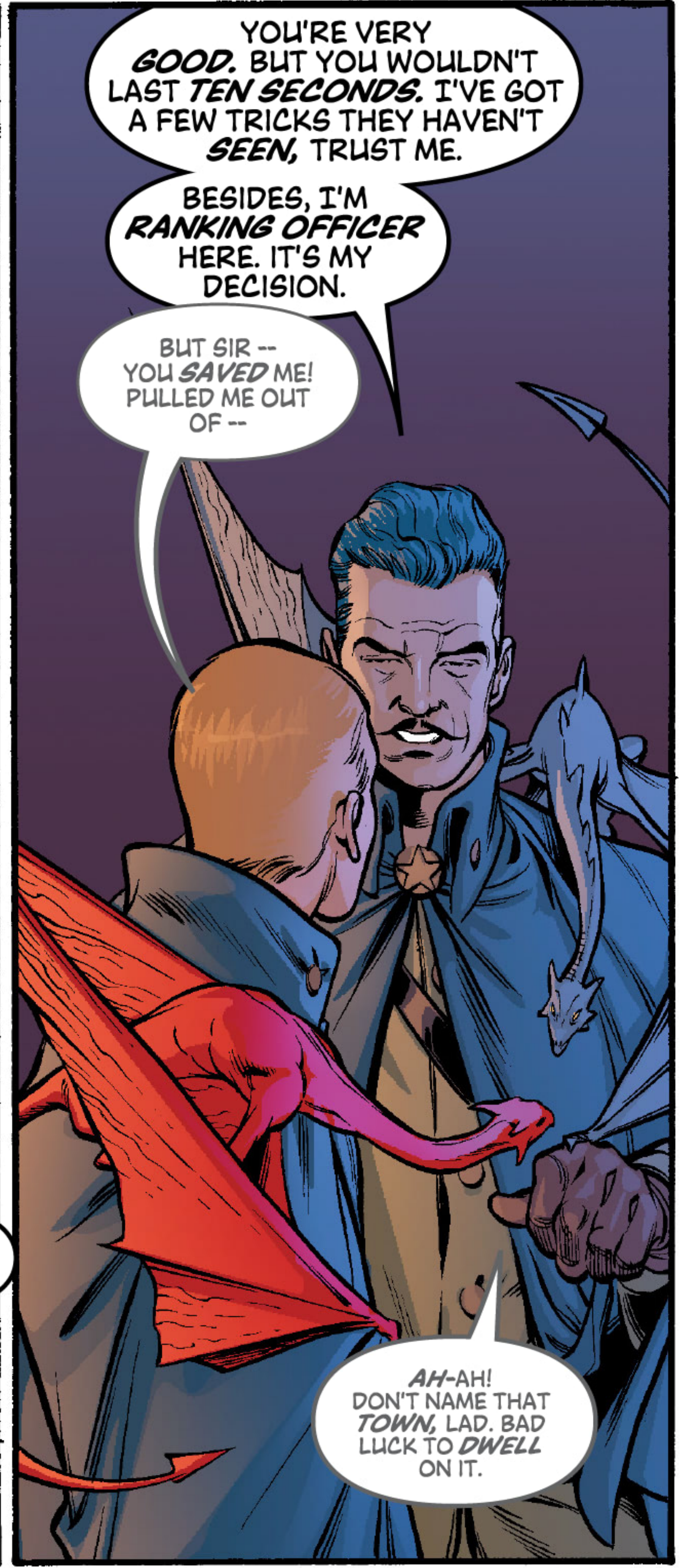


HUH?

CAPTAIN FOXE -- **NO!** YOU **CAN'T!** YOU'D NEVER --

I'LL GO. I'M PRETTY **FAST**, AND I CAN --

NO, FLETCHER.



YOU'RE VERY **GOOD**. BUT YOU WOULDN'T LAST **TEN SECONDS**. I'VE GOT A FEW TRICKS THEY HAVEN'T **SEEN**, TRUST ME.

BESIDES, I'M **RANKING OFFICER** HERE. IT'S MY DECISION.

BUT SIR -- YOU **SAVED** ME! PULLED ME OUT OF --

AH-AH! DON'T NAME THAT **TOWN**, LAD. BAD LUCK TO **DWELL** ON IT.



IF I'M NOT BACK BY MORNING, MOVE OUT AT **FIRST LIGHT**. THE PRUSSIANS ALREADY **KNOW** WE'RE HERE, SO IT'S NOT SAFE.

STAY OUT OF **SIGHT**, MAKE IT BACK HOME.

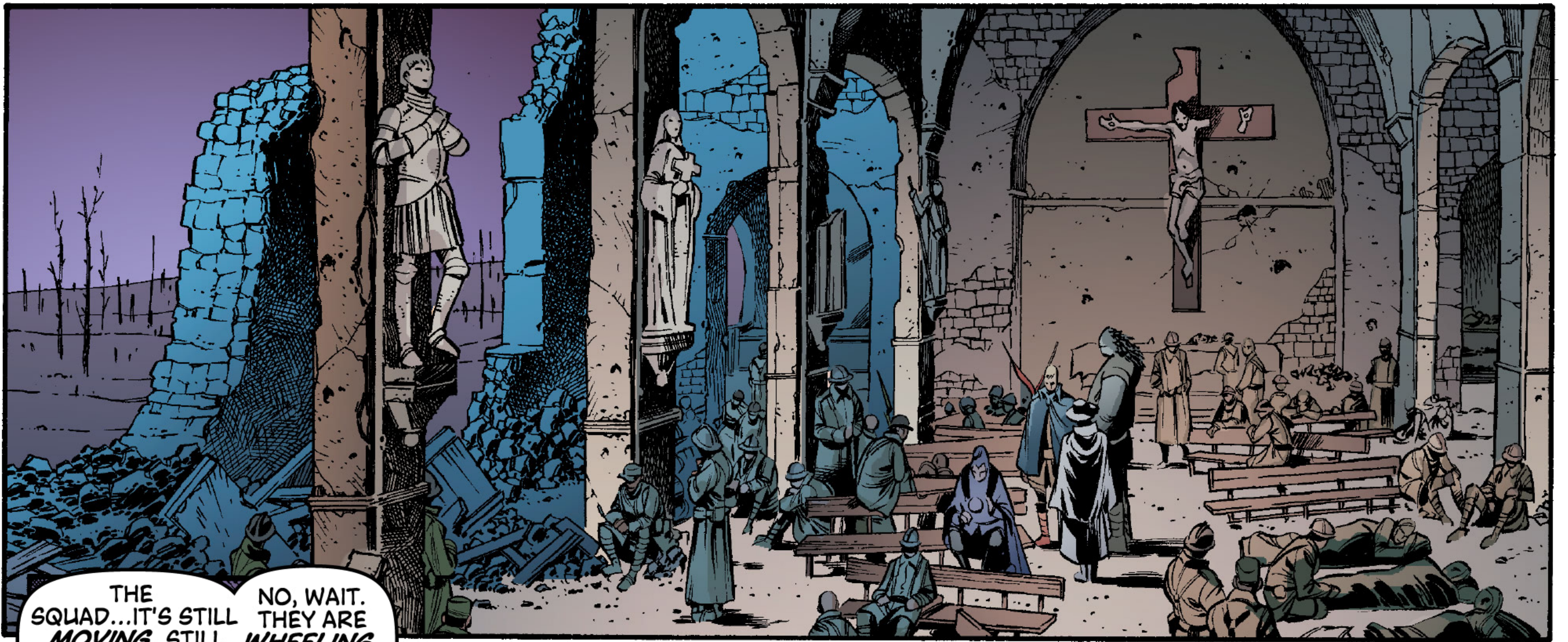
NO **HEROICS** -- YOUR JOB IS TO GET **HOME**, GOT IT?



YESSIR.

YES.





THE SQUAD...IT'S STILL MOVING. STILL COMING CLOSER. CLOSER...

NO, WAIT. THEY ARE WHEELING, CHANGING DIRECTION...

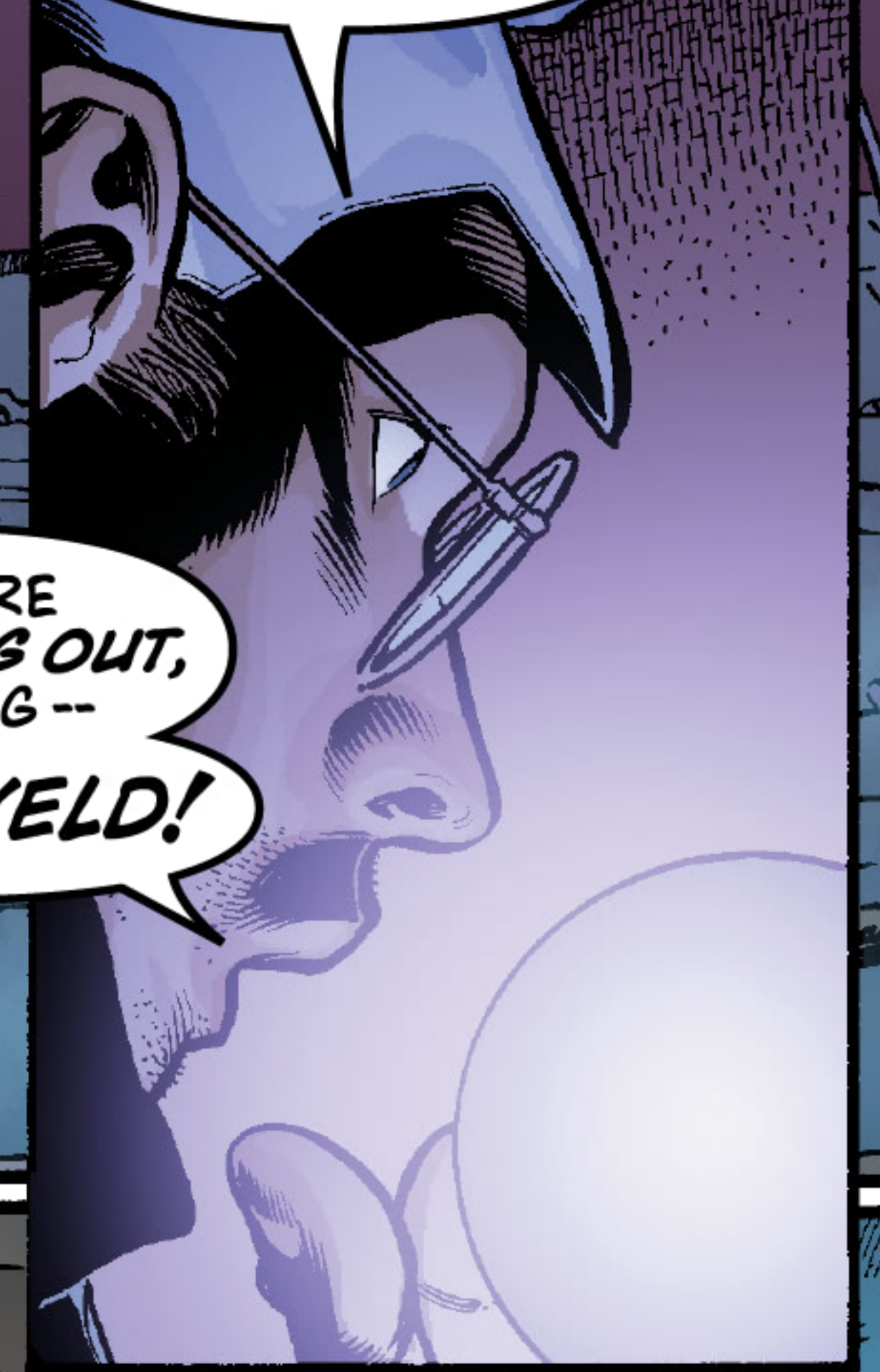


KIAAIIII!

THEIR PREY-SCREAM. THEY MUST HAVE SIGHTED HIM.

HE'S LEADING THEM ON A CHASE. INTO THE WOODS. BUT IT'S A FULL SQUAD -- THIRTY OF THEM --

THEY ARE SPREADING OUT, FLANKING -- VERDUIVELD!



WHAT?

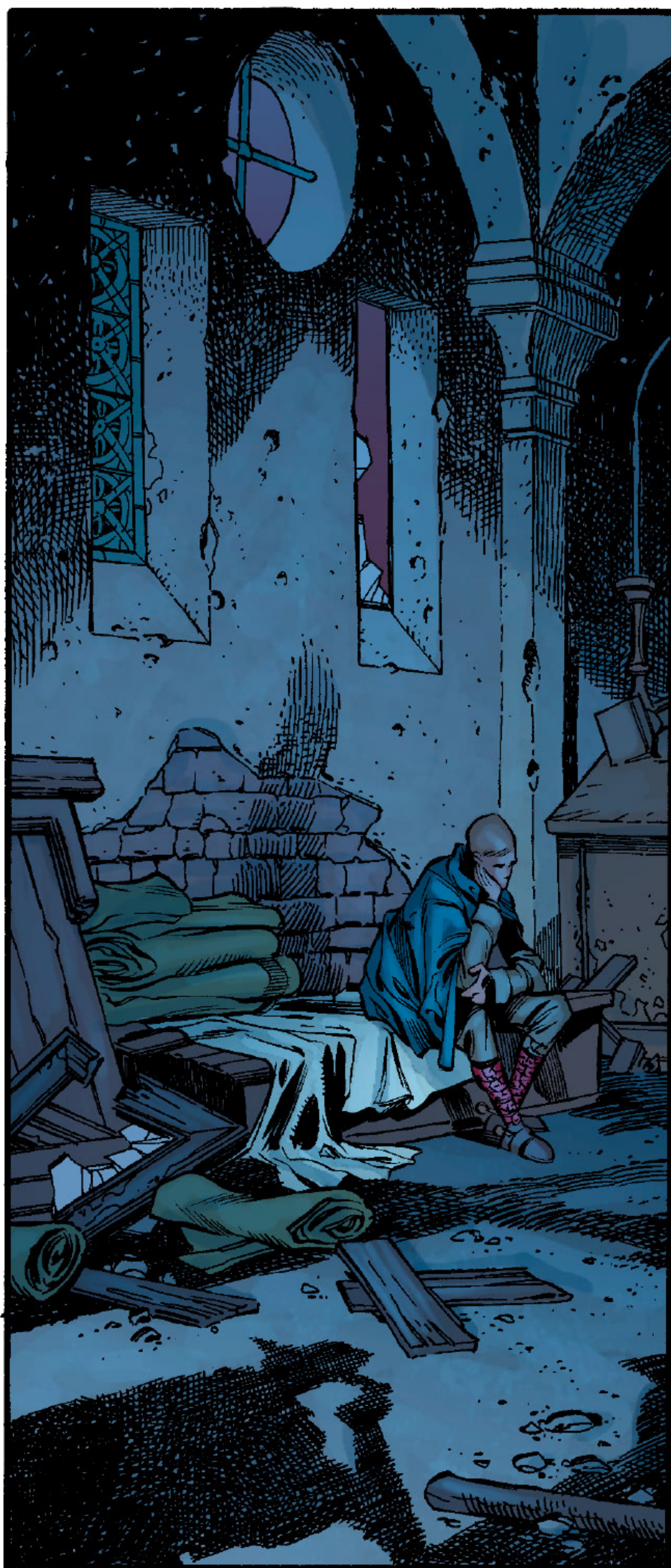
MILITARY VAMPIRES ARE MYSTICALLY "TAGGED." I NOW HAVE A READING. THEY'RE OURS. BULGARIANS, OUT OF CHÂLONS-SUR-MAME.

THEY'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE ABLE TO ATTACK ALLIES. BUT SOMETIMES THEY GET LOOSE, SLIP THEIR HANDLING SPELLS...

WAIT. WHAT IS...?

DAMN.





FLETCHER.

SO *THIS*
IS WHERE YOU
WENT.

I'M SORRY,
GRACE. I JUST...
I WANT TO BE
ALONE RIGHT
NOW.

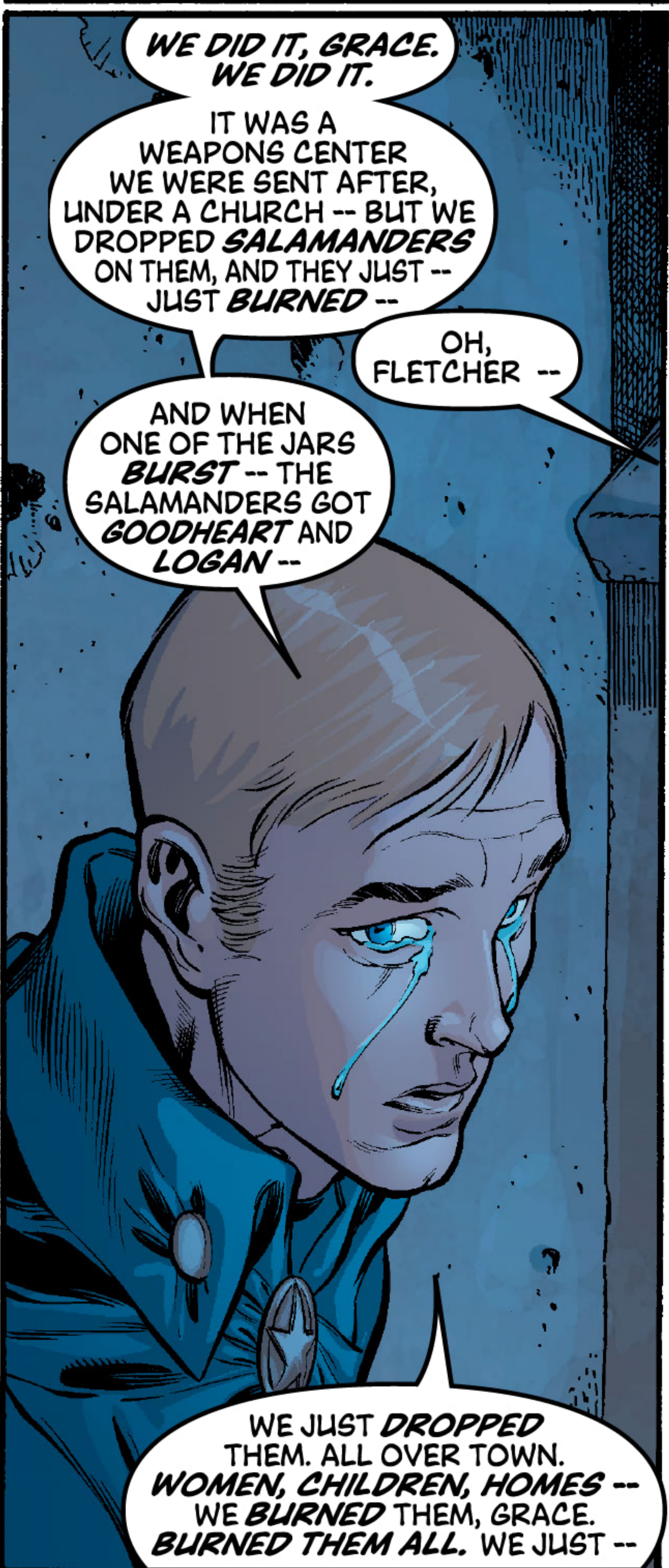


I KNOW HOW YOU
MUST FEEL. THIS WAR --
RAKO -- IT'S SO --
SO --

YOU'RE SICK
ABOUT *FOX*, WE ALL
ARE. BUT HE DID WHAT
HE DID FOR *US*. HE WAS
A GOOD MAN. A GOOD
MAN, JUST LIKE
YOU ARE --

NO.
NO,
WE'RE
NOT.

THAT *TOWN*?
THE TOWN THE
PRUSSIANS SAY WE
BURNED? WHY
THEY'RE SO
CRAZED?



WE DID IT, GRACE.
WE DID IT.

IT WAS A
WEAPONS CENTER
WE WERE SENT AFTER,
UNDER A CHURCH -- BUT WE
DROPPED *SALAMANDERS*
ON THEM, AND THEY JUST --
JUST *BURNED* --

OH,
FLETCHER --

AND WHEN
ONE OF THE JARS
BURST -- THE
SALAMANDERS GOT
GOODHEART AND
LOGAN --

WE JUST *DROPPED*
THEM. ALL OVER TOWN.
WOMEN, CHILDREN, HOMES --
WE *BURNED* THEM, GRACE.
BURNED THEM ALL. WE JUST --



SHH, *SHHH*.
YOU DIDN'T *MEAN*
TO -- YOU WERE
JUST TRYING
TO --

ROCKY'S
GODS -- THE
GODS OF THE
NORTH -- THEY'VE
TURNED AWAY,
TURNED THEIR *BACK*
ON US, IT'S OUR
FAULT --

IT'S ALL
RIGHT. IT'S *ALL*
RIGHT. IT'S NOT YOU.
IT'S JUST THE *WAR*.
JUST THIS *DAMNED*,
STINKING, VILE
WAR --

I DIDN'T --
THIS *WASN'T*
WHAT I --

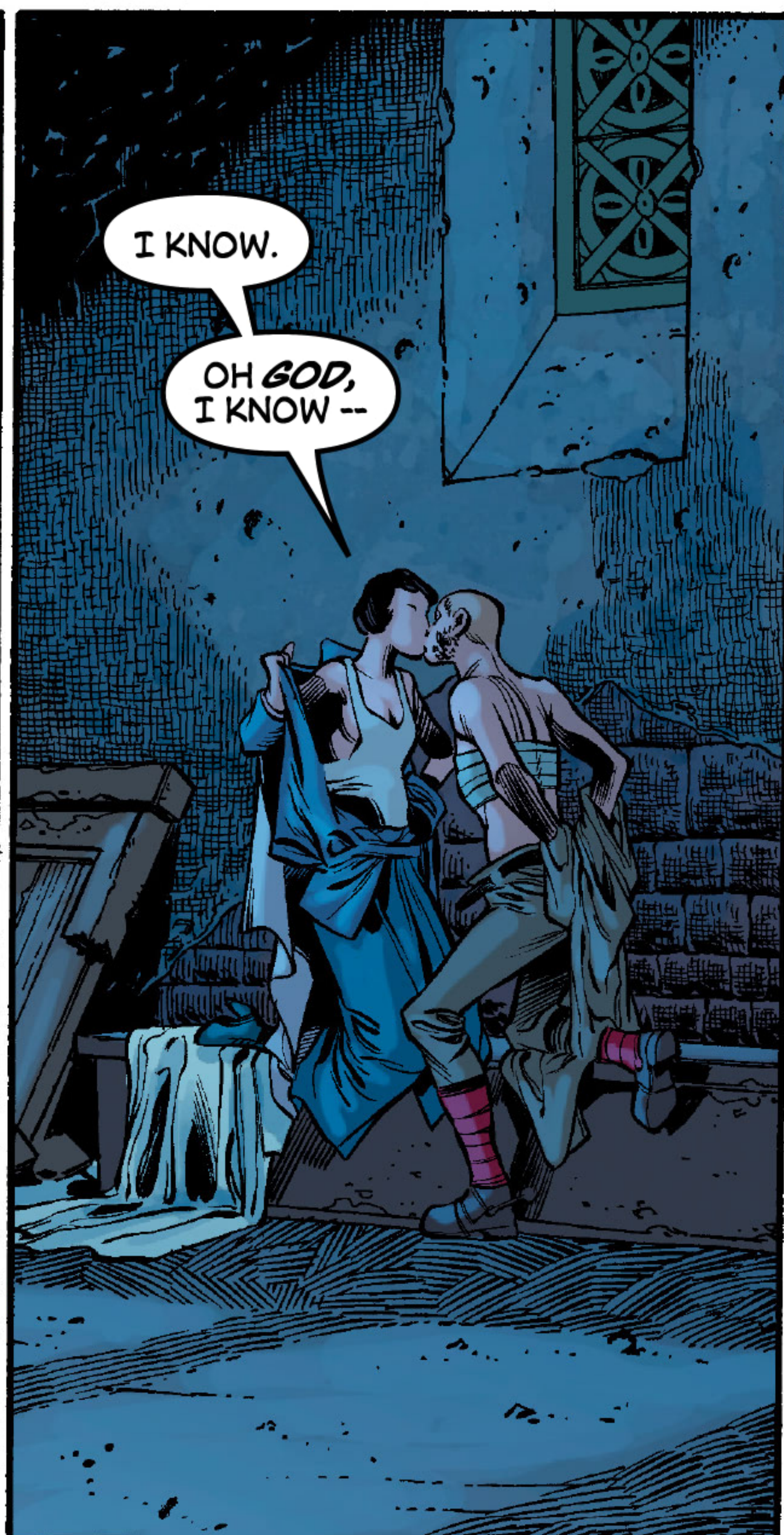


I KNOW,
I *KNOW*.

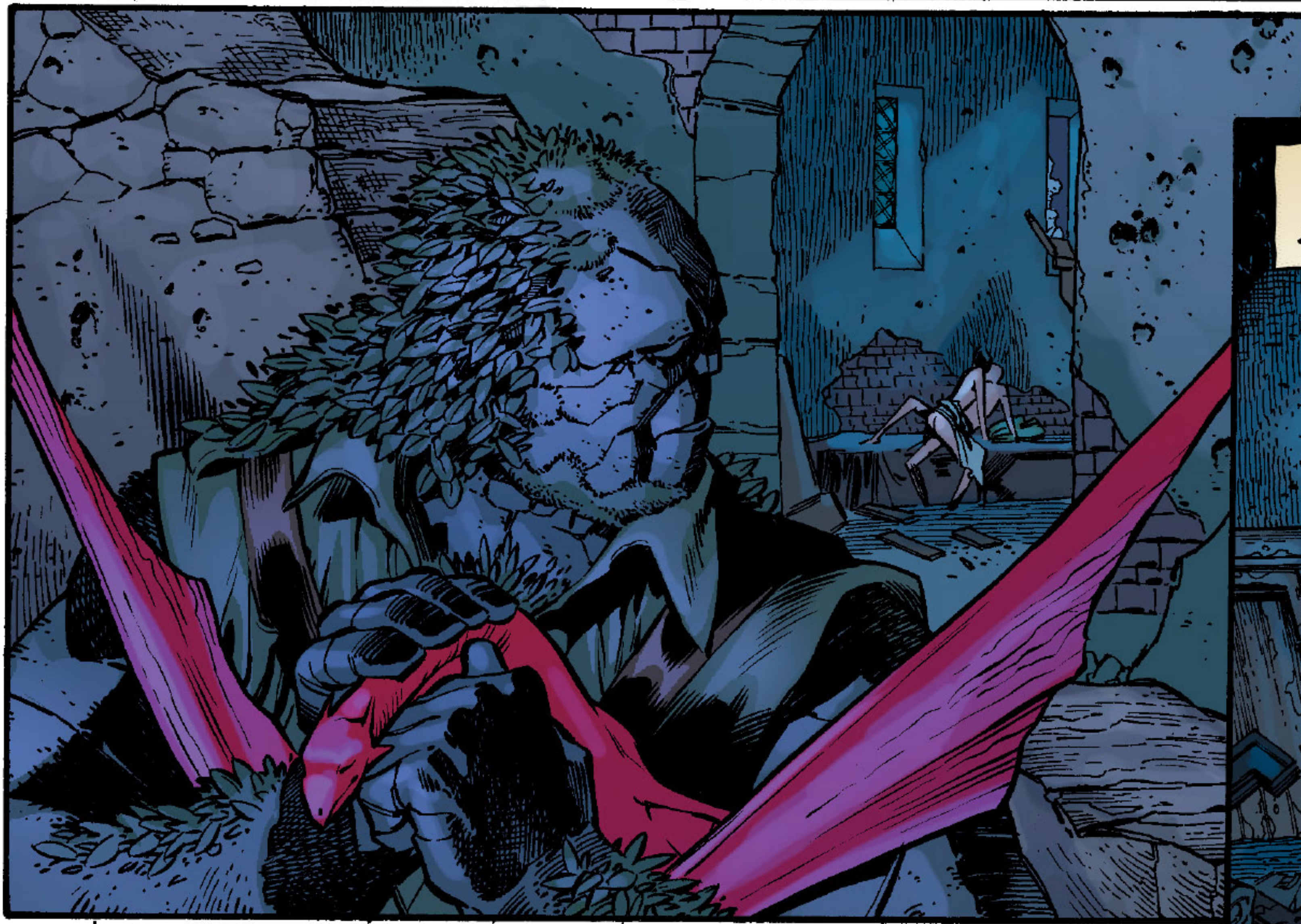
IT'S NOT
YOU, NOT ME, NOT
ANY OF US. IT'S THIS
WAR, THAT'S ALL. IT
DEVOURS US --
CHANGES US.



NNNNNNH!
GRACE, I --
I NEED --



I KNOW.
OH GOD,
I KNOW --



*I felt so lost,
so overwhelmed --*
*I needed to
touch, to feel --*



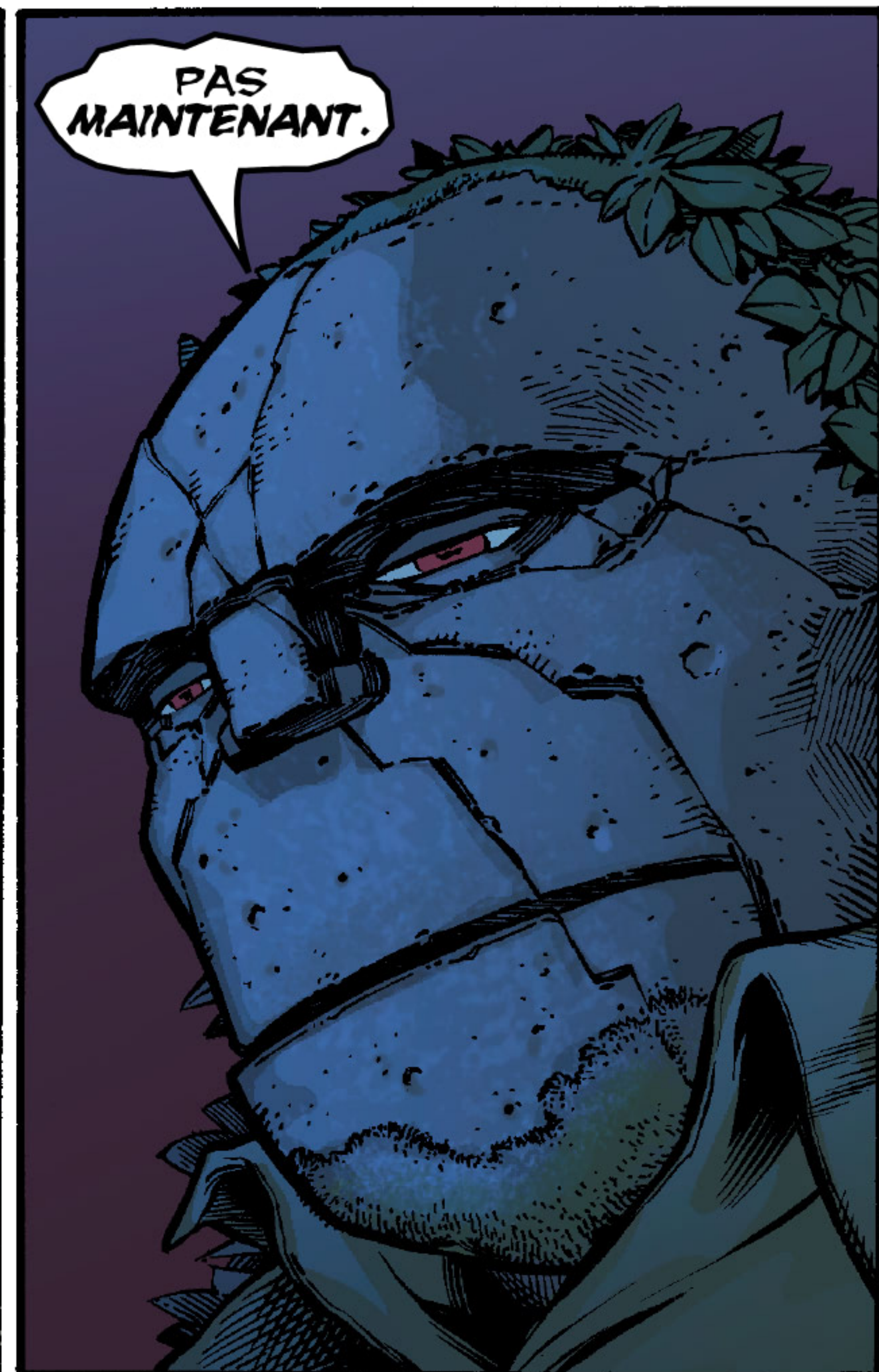
*To remind myself what life
meant -- that it was real,
that it mattered --*
*That we were both alive.
Lost, drowning -- but
not alone --*



AH-AH.
ON N'PASSE
PAS.

MAIS ROCKY --
J'ME CAILLE ET J'AI UNE
AUTRE COUVERTURE
LA-DEDANS.

ALLEZ, J'EN
AI JUSTE POUR
UNE MINUTE...



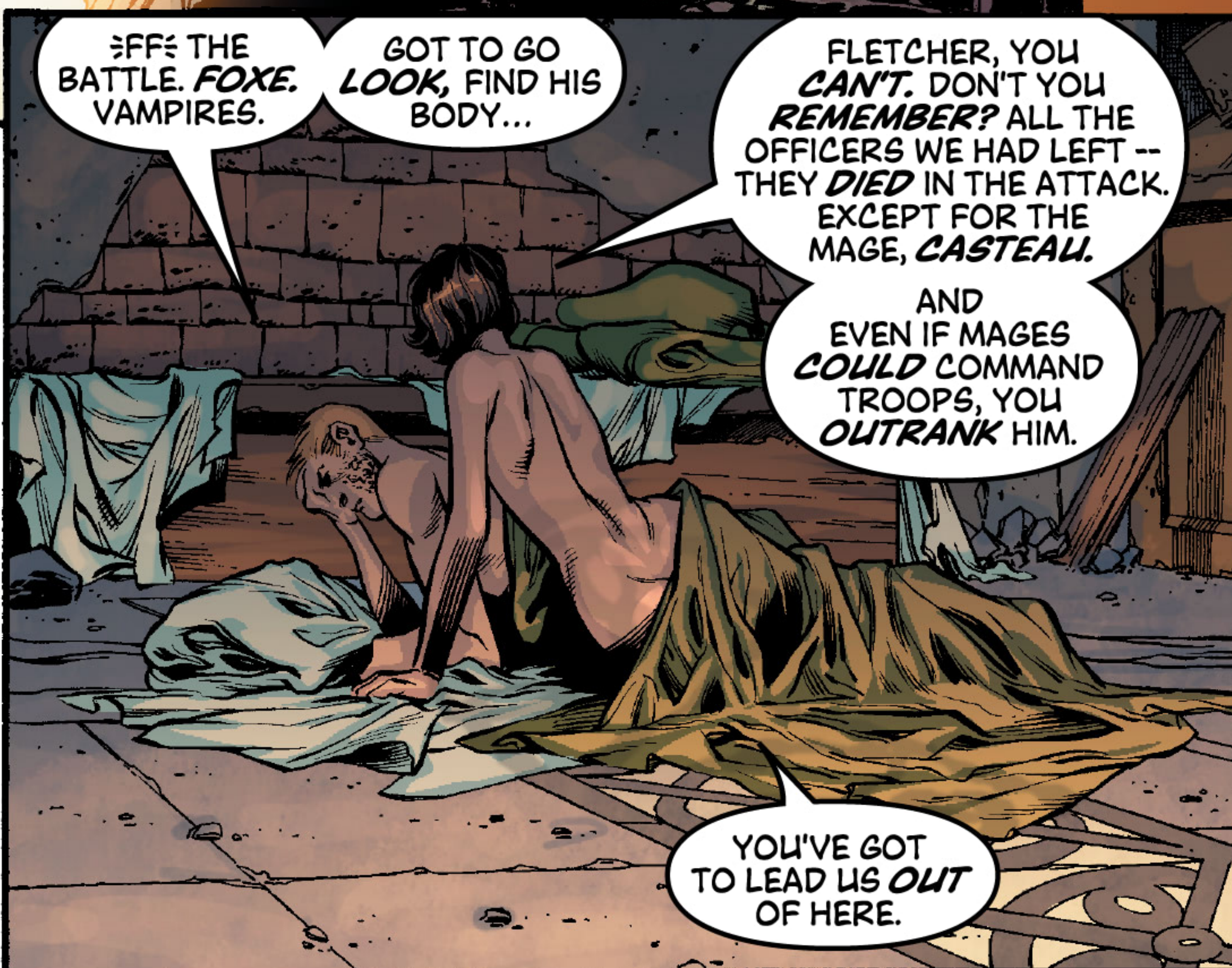
PAS
MAINTENANT.



FLETCHER?

FLETCHER,
IT'S *DAWN*. YOU'VE
GOT TO *GET UP*,
GET READY.

NNNNN...



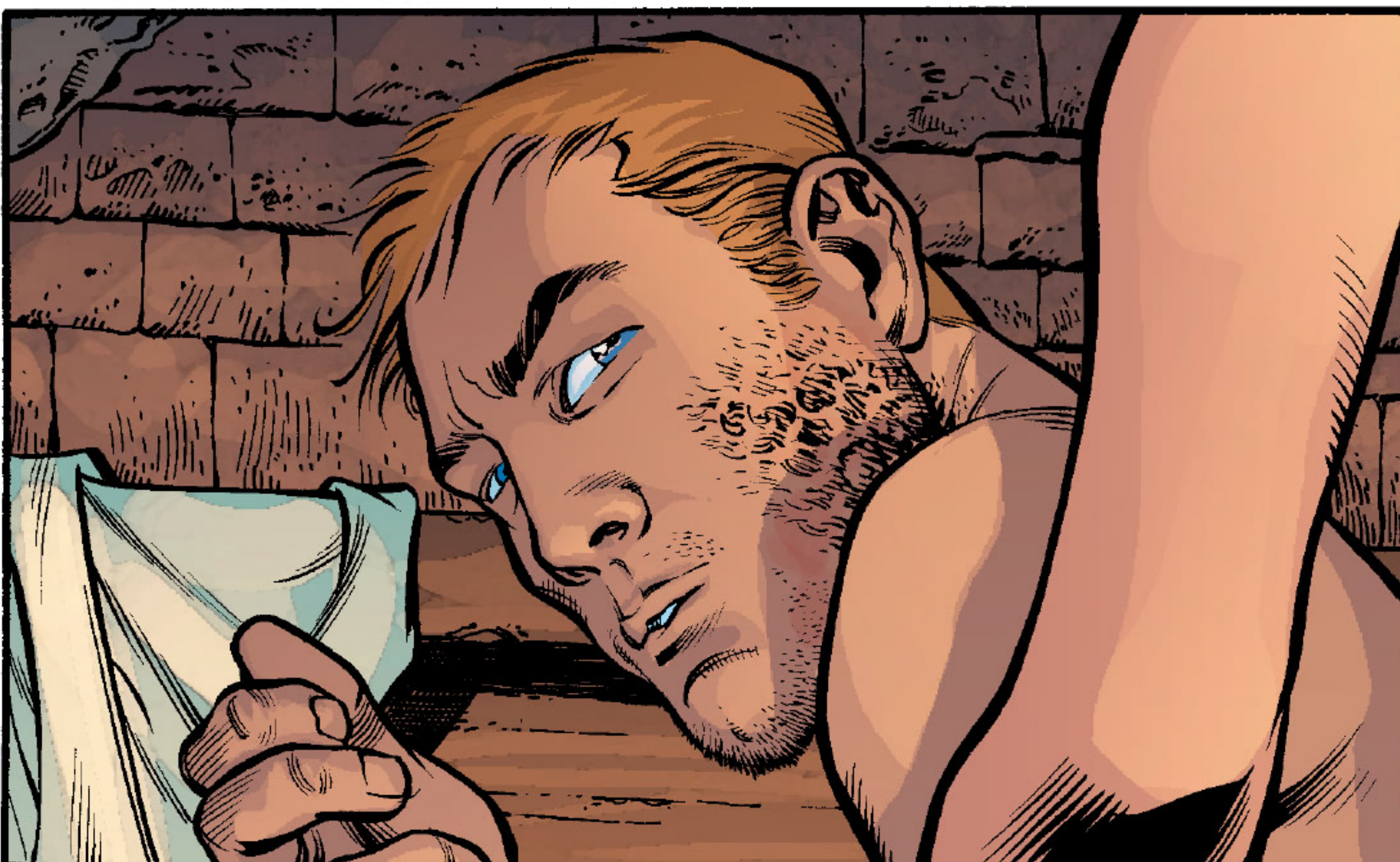
EFFE THE
BATTLE. *FOX*.
VAMPIRES.

GOT TO GO
LOOK, FIND HIS
BODY...

FLETCHER, YOU
CAN'T. DON'T YOU
REMEMBER? ALL THE
OFFICERS WE HAD LEFT --
THEY *DIED* IN THE ATTACK.
EXCEPT FOR THE
MAGE, *CASTEAU*.

AND
EVEN IF MAGES
COULD COMMAND
TROOPS, YOU
OUTRANK HIM.

YOU'VE GOT
TO LEAD US *OUT*
OF HERE.





...CARRY THE **PROVISIONS**. WE'LL LEAVE THE BODIES, BUT CASTEAU'S LEFT A **THALIMATIC BEACON** SO WE CAN RECOVER THEM LATER.

I didn't want to do it.

Didn't want to have anyone depending on me. Didn't think I could manage it.



But I had no choice.

THIS WAY!

THERE'S COVER ABOUT SEVENTY YARDS AHEAD! STAY LOW -- BUT QUICK! **QUICK!**

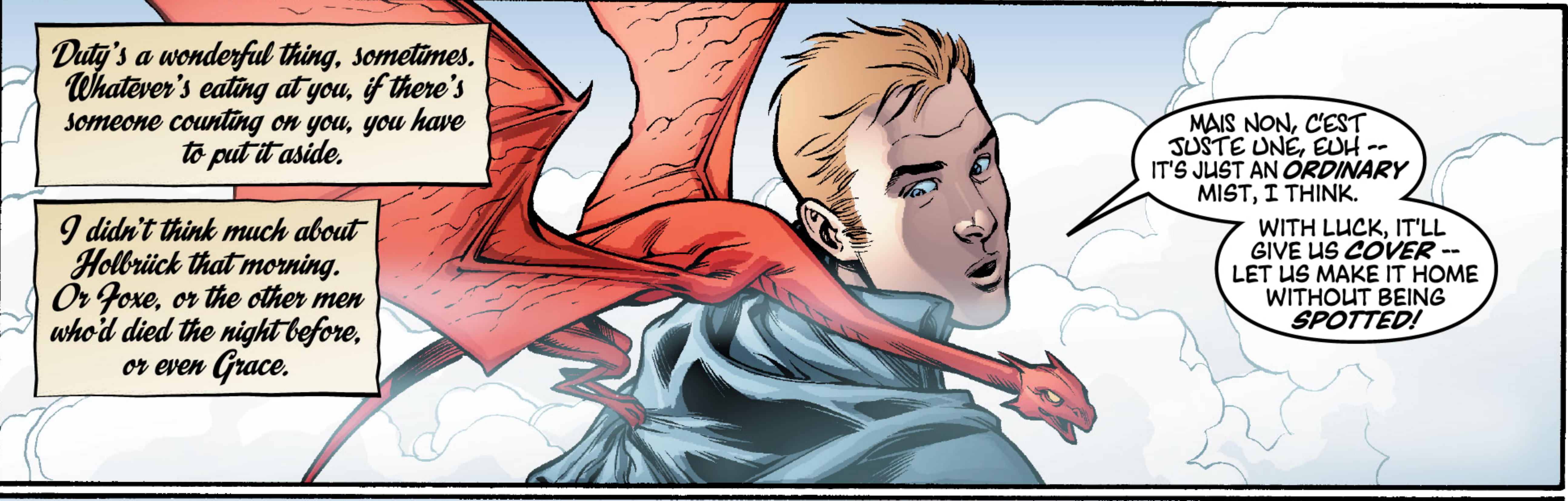


I was all they had. And someone had to do it.

DE LA BRUME!

QU'EST-CE QUE C'EST? DE LA BRUME DÉVORANTE?

CETTE SALOPERIE DE BRUME PRUSSIENNE QUI CHANGE LES HOMMES EN MONSTRES?

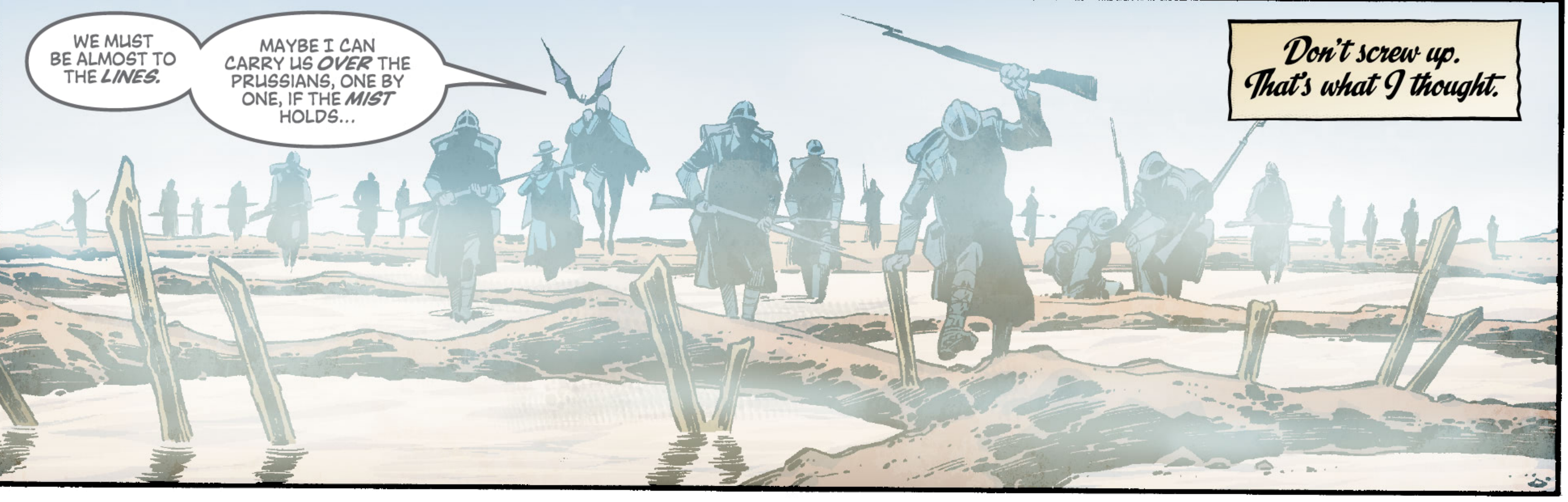


Duty's a wonderful thing, sometimes. Whatever's eating at you, if there's someone counting on you, you have to put it aside.

I didn't think much about Holbrück that morning. Or Foxe, or the other men who'd died the night before, or even Grace.

MAIS NON, C'EST JUSTE UNE, EUH -- IT'S JUST AN **ORDINARY** MIST, I THINK.

WITH LUCK, IT'LL GIVE US **COVER** -- LET US MAKE IT HOME WITHOUT BEING **SPOTTED!**



WE MUST BE ALMOST TO THE **LINES**.

MAYBE I CAN CARRY US **OVER** THE PRUSSIANS, ONE BY ONE, IF THE **MIST** HOLDS...

Don't screw up. That's what I thought.



DES SOLDATS!
LE PRUSSIENS!

OH, NO!
SPREAD
OUT, EVERYONE!
NO GROUPS,
NO LARGE
TARGETS!

LAY
DOWN FIRE,
THEN RETREAT
TO --

I SAY...



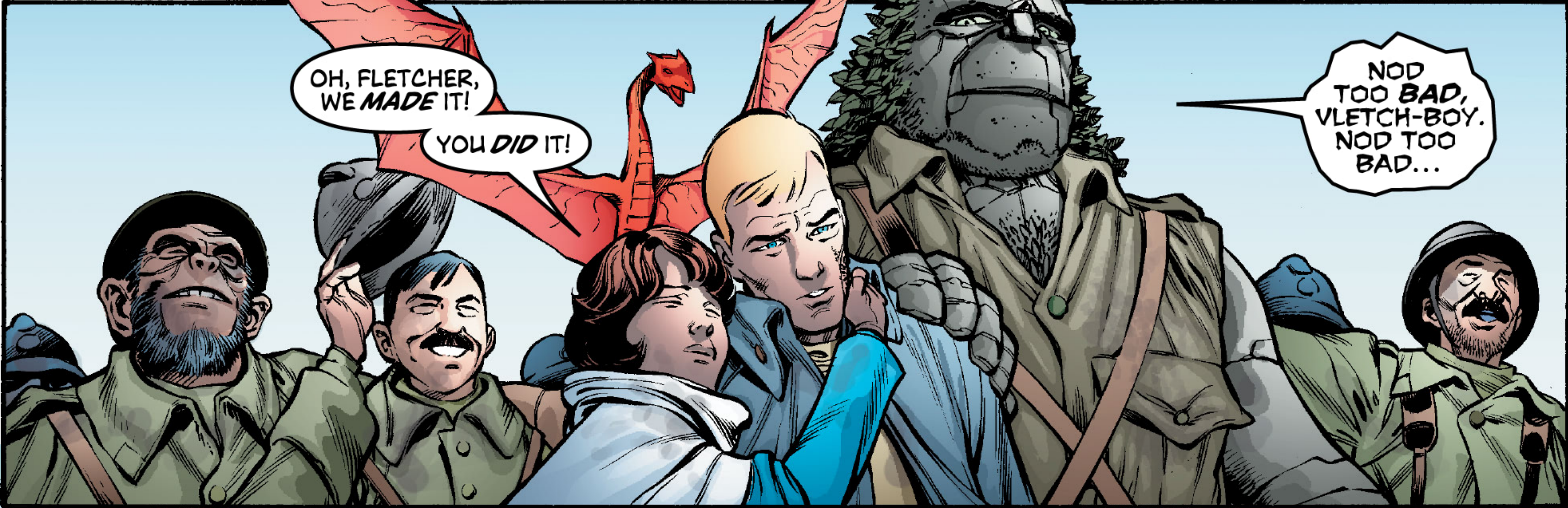
...IS THAT A
YANK VOICE I
HEAR?

AND AN
AIRMAN, NO LESS --
LEADING INFANTRY? THE
LOTHARINGIAN 14TH,
IS IT?

CAPTAIN
DONALD THOMASON,
THIRD ALBIONNESE FUSILIERS,
AT YOUR SERVICE. WE
WERE TOLD YOU MIGHT
BE IN THIS SECTOR.

And I didn't.

*We must have made it
through the lines in the fog.
Missed the Prussians
by the sheerest chance.*



OH, FLETCHER,
WE MADE IT!

YOU DID IT!

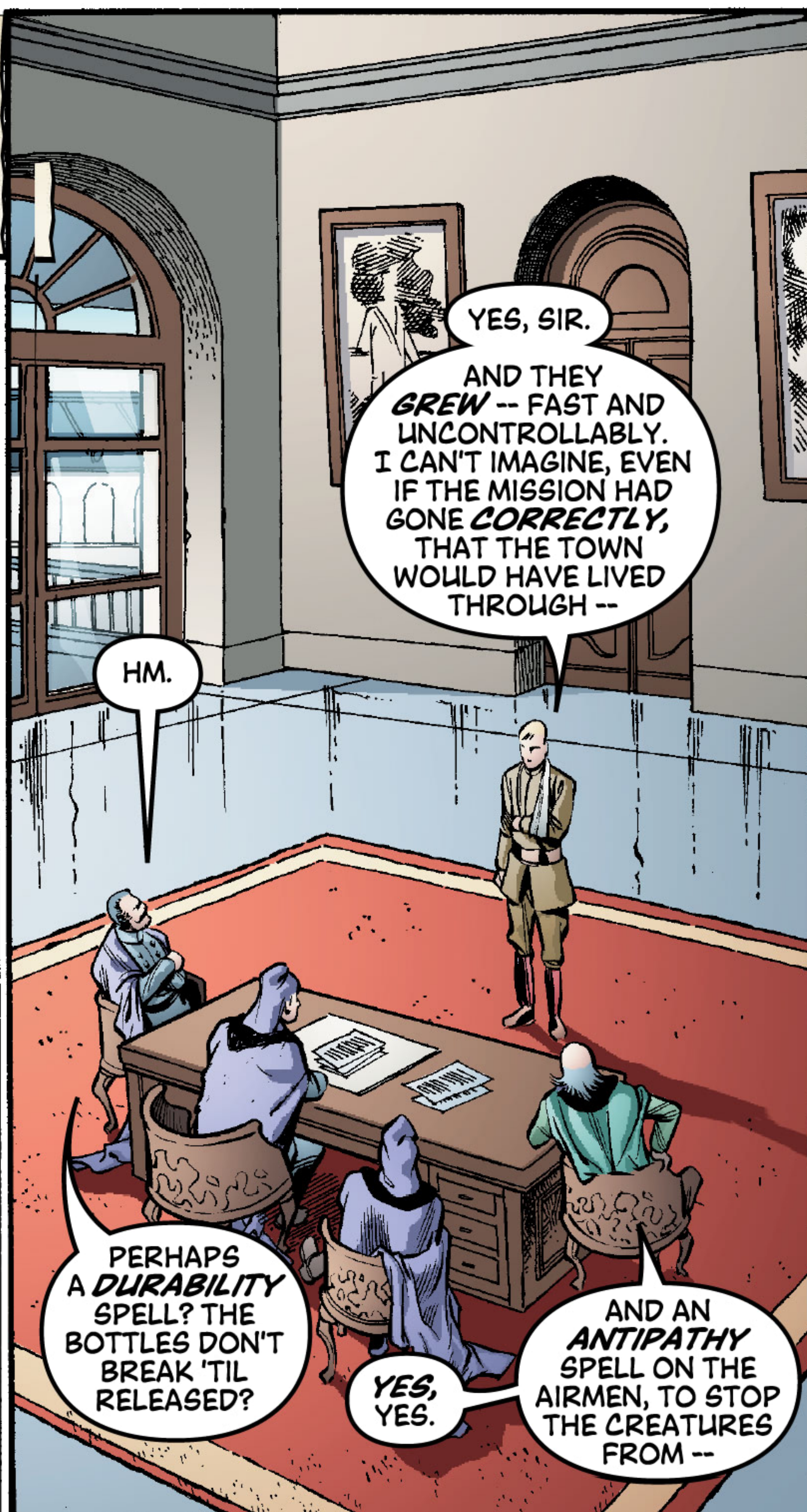
NOD
TOO BAD,
VLECH-BOY.
NOD TOO
BAD...



I wish I could say that made it all better. That I learned a lesson about the loneliness of command, and I understood it all now.

But I didn't and I don't. I spent a week in the hospital, and when they let me go, I reported to the Académie Militaire for debriefing.

...AND YOU SAY THE PREMATURELY-RELEASED SALAMANDERS LEAPT FROM AIRMAN TO AIRMAN?



HM.

YES, SIR.

AND THEY GREW -- FAST AND UNCONTROLLABLY. I CAN'T IMAGINE, EVEN IF THE MISSION HAD GONE CORRECTLY, THAT THE TOWN WOULD HAVE LIVED THROUGH --

PERHAPS A DURABILITY SPELL? THE BOTTLES DON'T BREAK 'TIL RELEASED?

YES, YES.

AND AN ANTIPATHY SPELL ON THE AIRMEN, TO STOP THE CREATURES FROM --



SIRS, PLEASE. I DON'T THINK YOU UNDERSTAND. EVEN IF THEY'D WORKED PERFECTLY, WHAT WE DID IN THAT TOWN WAS --

EXCUSE ME. URGENT REPORT, SIRS. AN INTACT CANISTER OF PRUSSIAN R-MIST HAS BEEN CAPTURED IN SECTOR 48.

IT'S BEING BROUGHT IN NOW.

EH?

QUOI?!

THANK YOU, LIEUTENANT ARROWSMITH. YOUR TESTIMONY HAS BEEN VALUABLE, AND YOUR CONCERNS NOTED. DISMISSED.

They didn't care. No, that's not right. They cared, but it didn't matter.

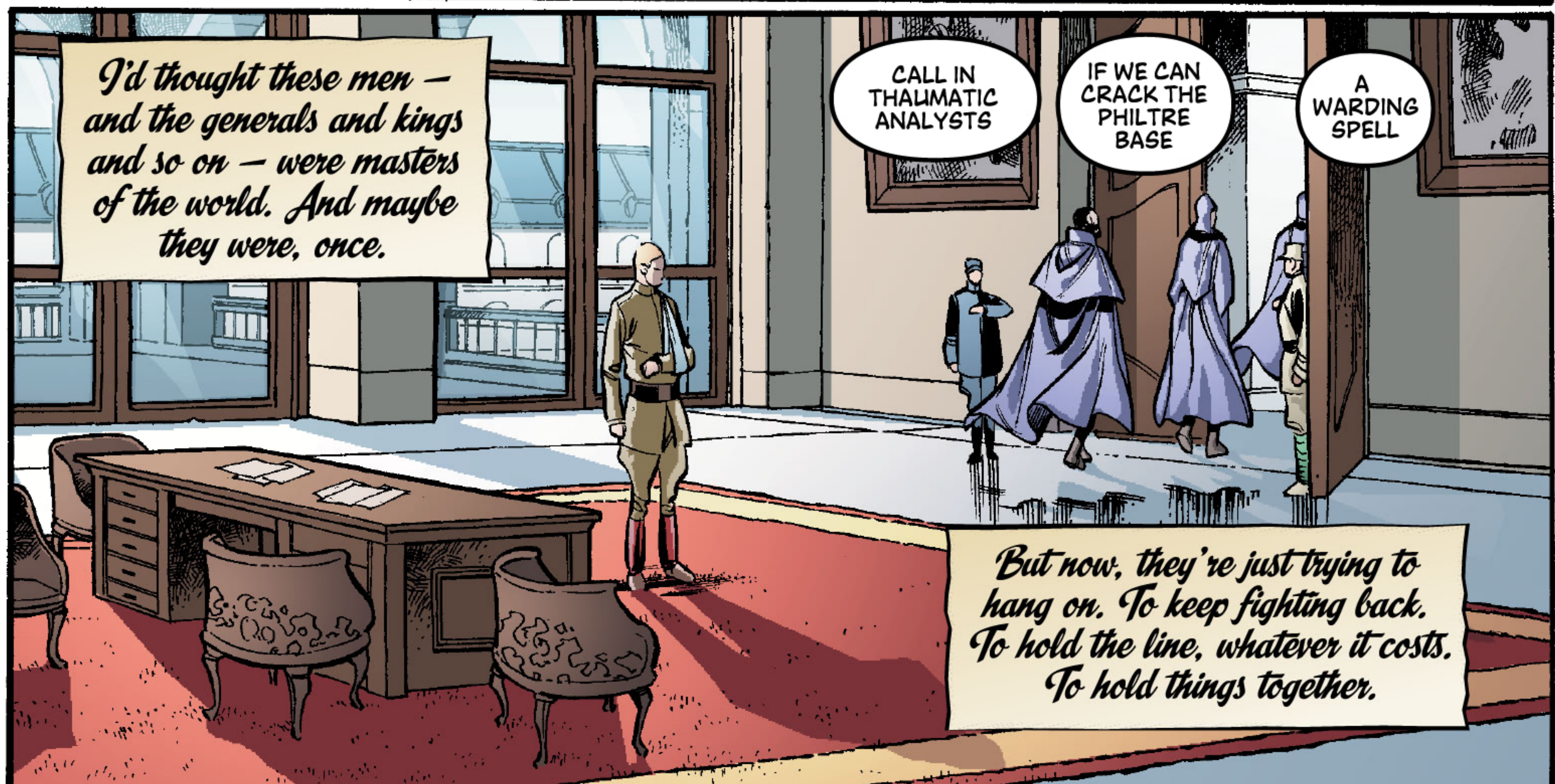


I'd thought these men -- and the generals and kings and so on -- were masters of the world. And maybe they were, once.

CALL IN THALMATIC ANALYSTS

IF WE CAN CRACK THE PHILTRE BASE

A WARDING SPELL



But now, they're just trying to hang on. To keep fighting back. To hold the line, whatever it costs. To hold things together.



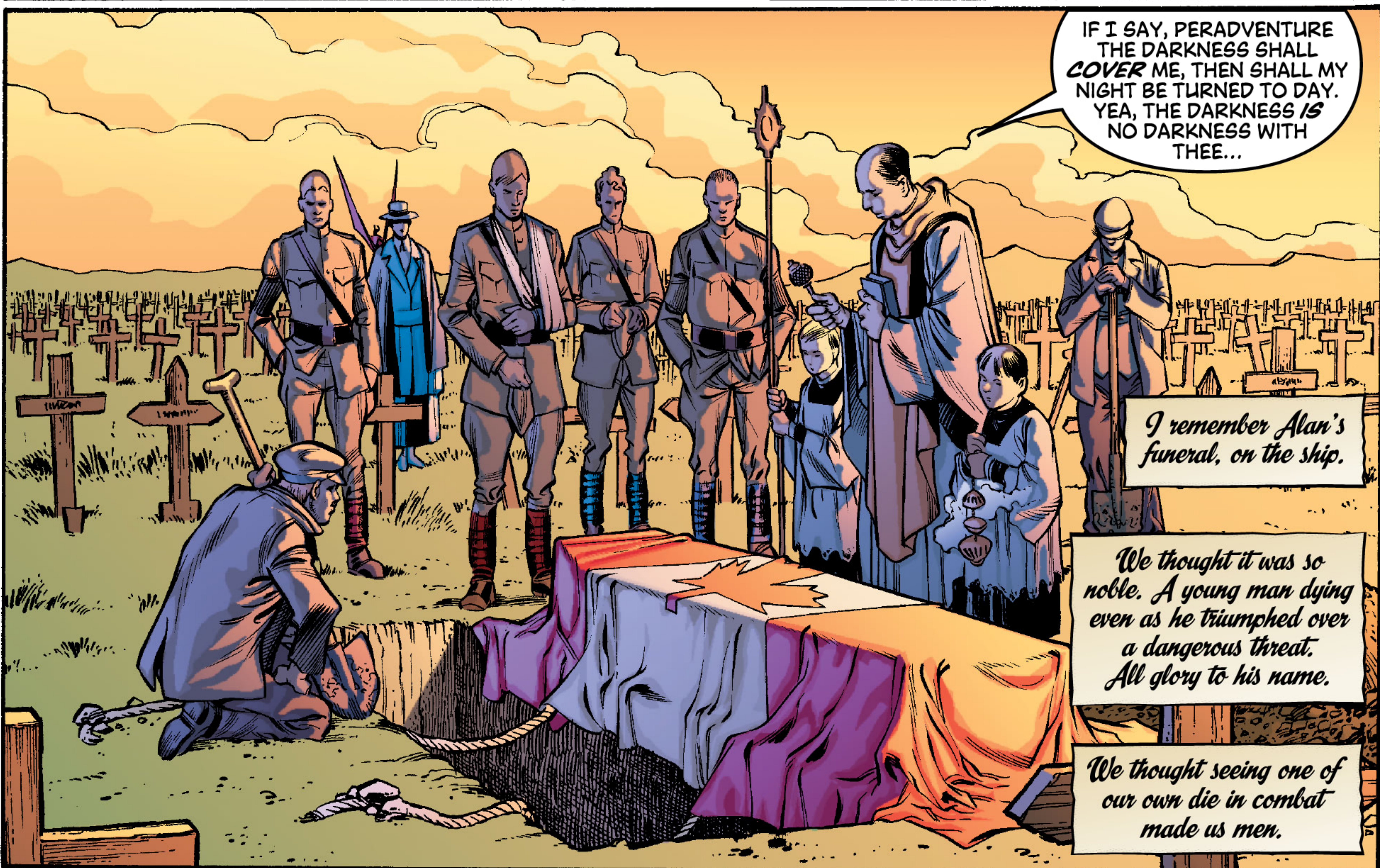
To hold things together like Foxe had.

The Prussians recovered his body, and returned it.



It was honorable of them to do that. I wonder if they'd have been so eager to do it if they knew Foxe led the "Butchers of Holbrück."

I wonder if it matters.

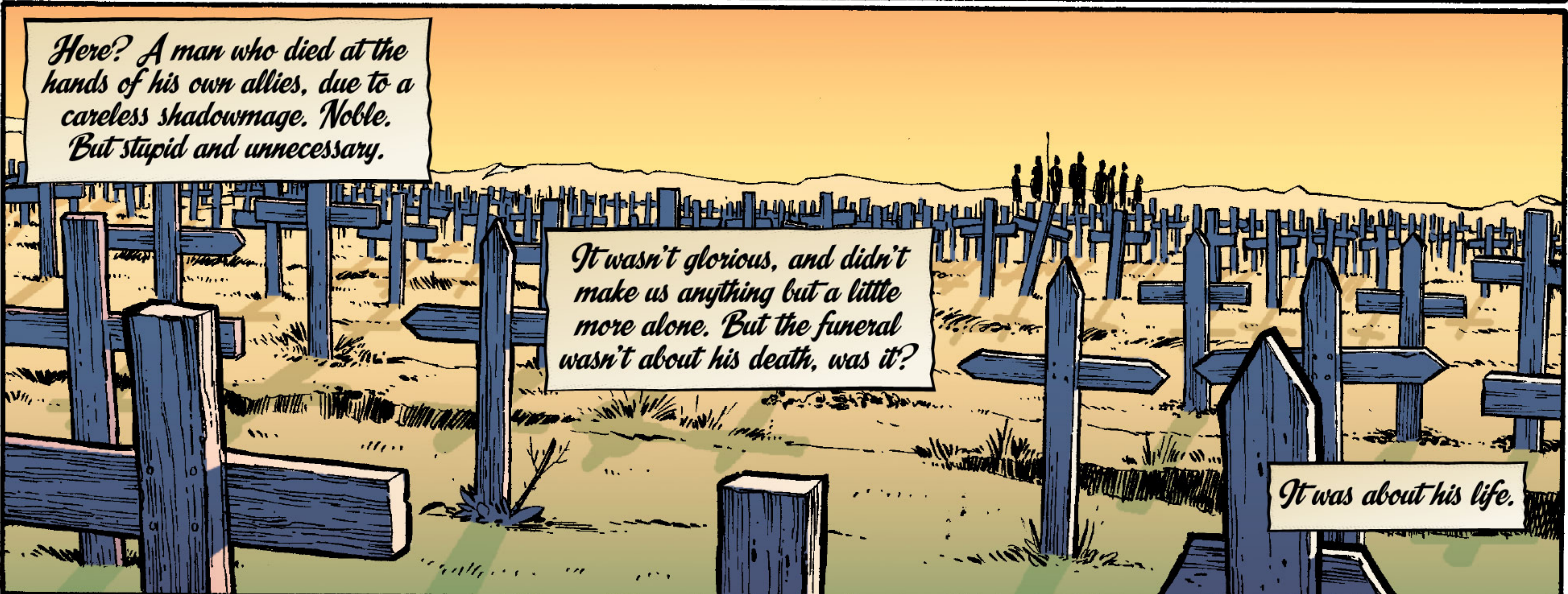


IF I SAY, PERADVENTURE THE DARKNESS SHALL COVER ME, THEN SHALL MY NIGHT BE TURNED TO DAY. YEA, THE DARKNESS IS NO DARKNESS WITH THEE...

I remember Alan's funeral, on the ship.

We thought it was so noble. A young man dying even as he triumphed over a dangerous threat. All glory to his name.

We thought seeing one of our own die in combat made us men.



Here? A man who died at the hands of his own allies, due to a careless shadowmage. Noble. But stupid and unnecessary.

It wasn't glorious, and didn't make us anything but a little more alone. But the funeral wasn't about his death, was it?

It was about his life.



*I don't know who Foxe was,
outside the war.
What he did, what his life was like.
But he was a good man.*

*He did what he felt had to be done,
and paid in blood to defend people,
lands and ideals that he loved.*

...COMMIT
HIS BODY
TO THE GROUND.
**EARTH TO EARTH,
ASHES TO
ASHES...**

*The funeral was a way
for the living to thank him
for all he did in life.*



*Alan, Jonathan, Foxe, so many others.
Too many funerals. Too many people on
both sides, dying for what they believe in.*

*And doing things they
wouldn't have dreamed
of along the way.*



HNH. NEW MEAT
FROM CALAIS.
WELCOME TO THE
WAR, BOYS.
WHATEVER YOU'RE
EXPECTING...
FORGET IT.

HM?

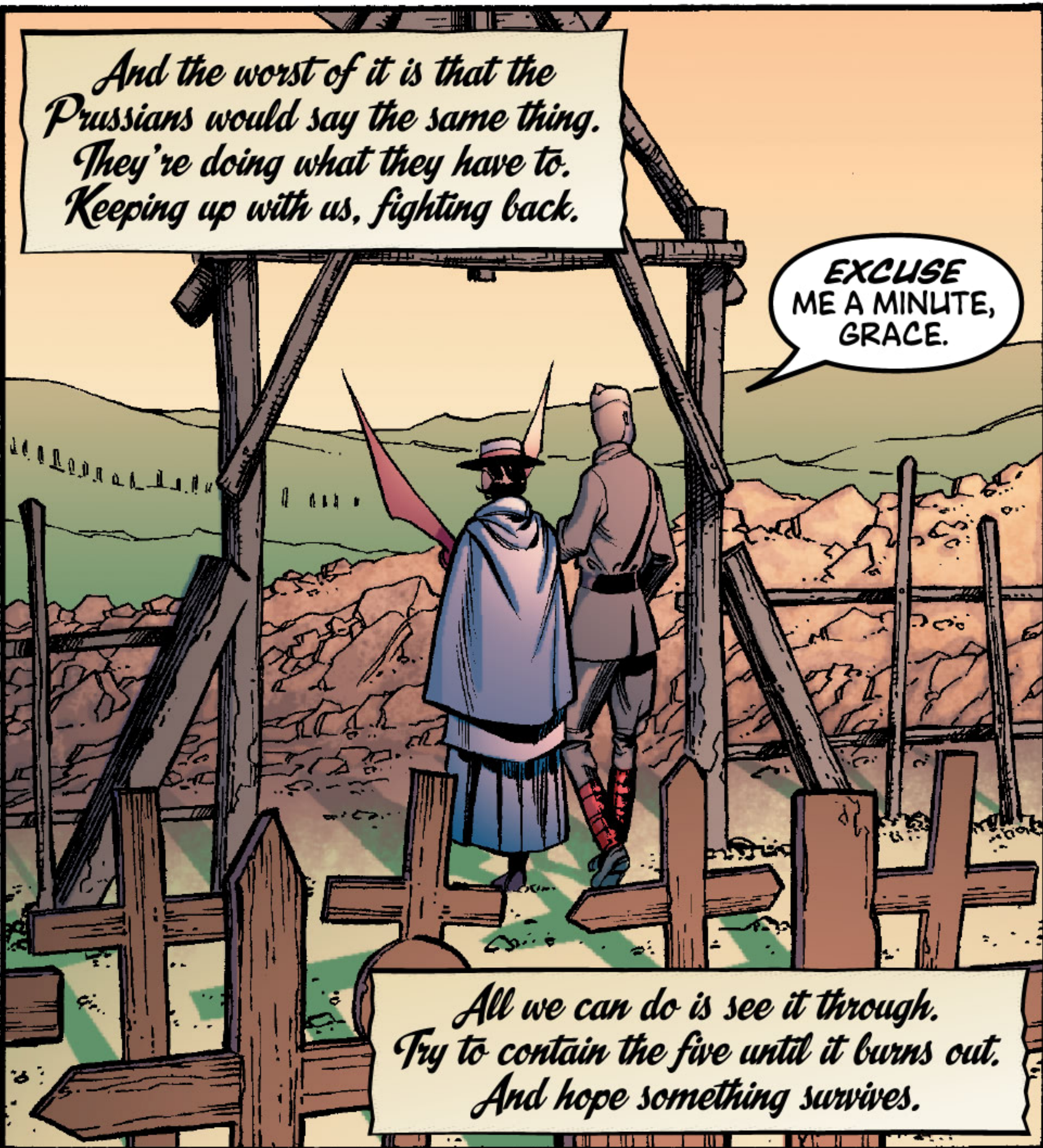
*And the people we think
are in charge aren't.
The war is in charge.*

FLETCHER?
WHAT IS IT?



I'M --
AH --

*We fight, and innocents
die. But if we quit,
more innocents die.*

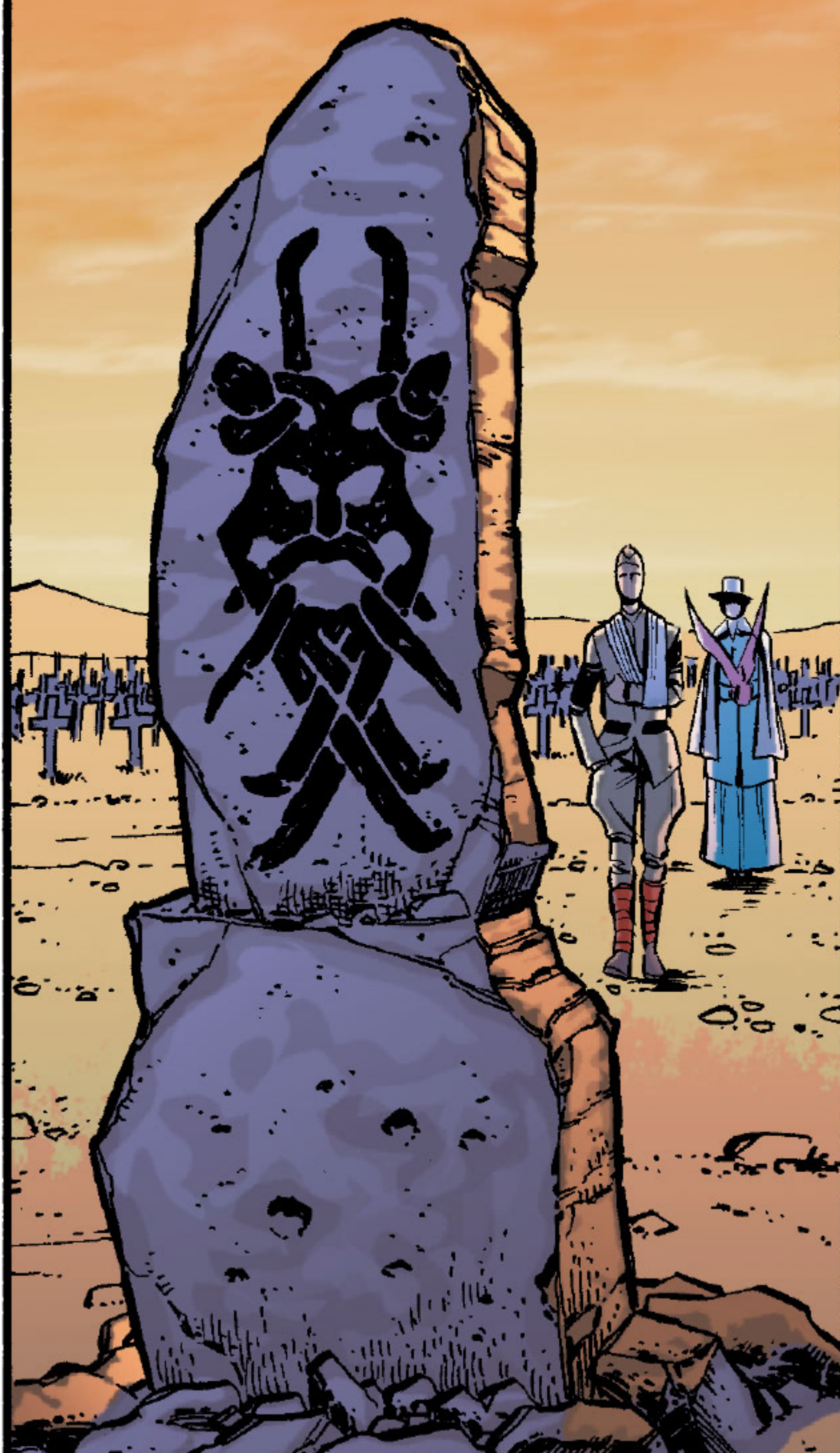


*And the worst of it is that the
Prussians would say the same thing.
They're doing what they have to.
Keeping up with us, fighting back.*

EXCUSE
ME A MINUTE,
GRACE.

*All we can do is see it through.
Try to contain the fire until it burns out.
And hope something survives.*

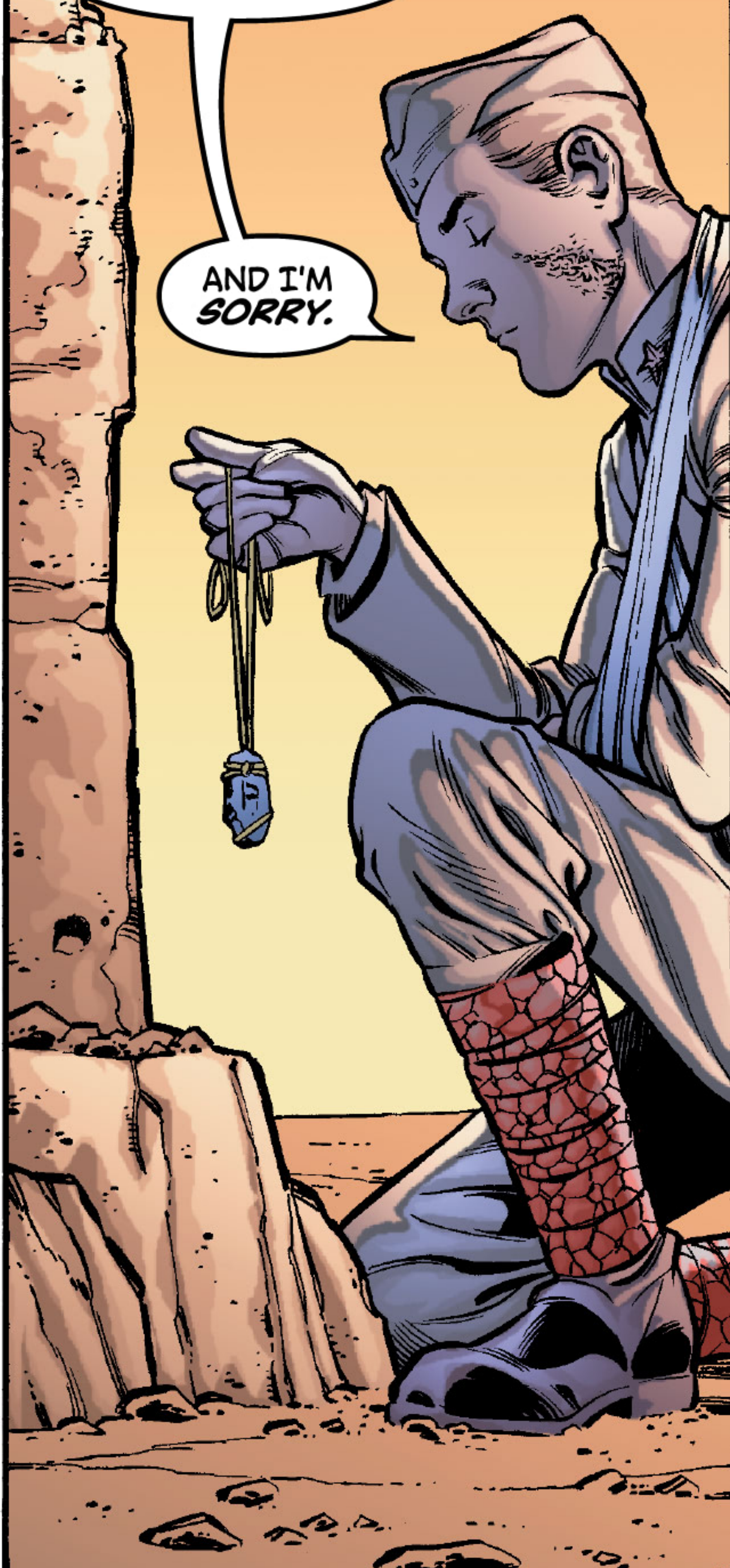
I think your northern gods are gone, Rocky. And maybe not just them. The whole world is changing.



*Old ways are ending.
New ways are being born.*

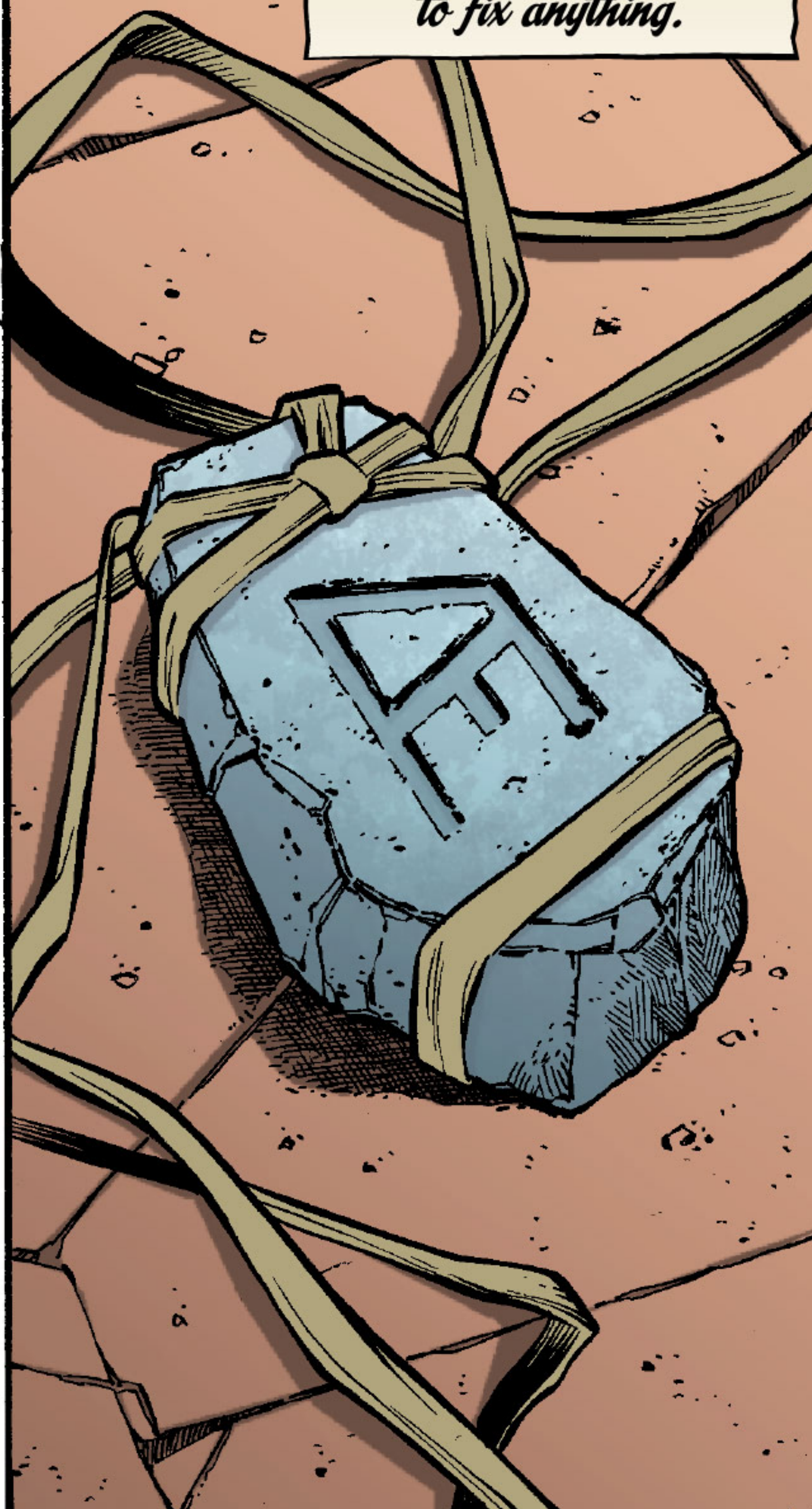
I DON'T KNOW
IF YOU CAN HEAR ME.
BUT THANK YOU.

AND I'M
SORRY.



*And whether that's good
or bad, whether we're building a
better future, or hell on Earth —
we just don't know.*

*And we won't, until it's
all over, and it's too late
to fix anything.*



I'VE GOT
TO GO,
FLETCHER.

I'M BEING
SENT **SOUTH**, NEAR A
PLACE CALLED VERDUN.
NEW RECRUITS **THERE**,
TOO, AND I'VE GOT
TO **TRAIN** SOME
OF THEM.

WRITE ME,
OR **ELSE**.



*And whatever's coming, it'll
be up to men — not gods,
maybe not even wizards and
lords — to make something
of the mess that's left.*

GRACE!

I **WILL**.
I'LL WRITE.
TAKE **CARE**, ALL
RIGHT?

HM?



If they can, at least.

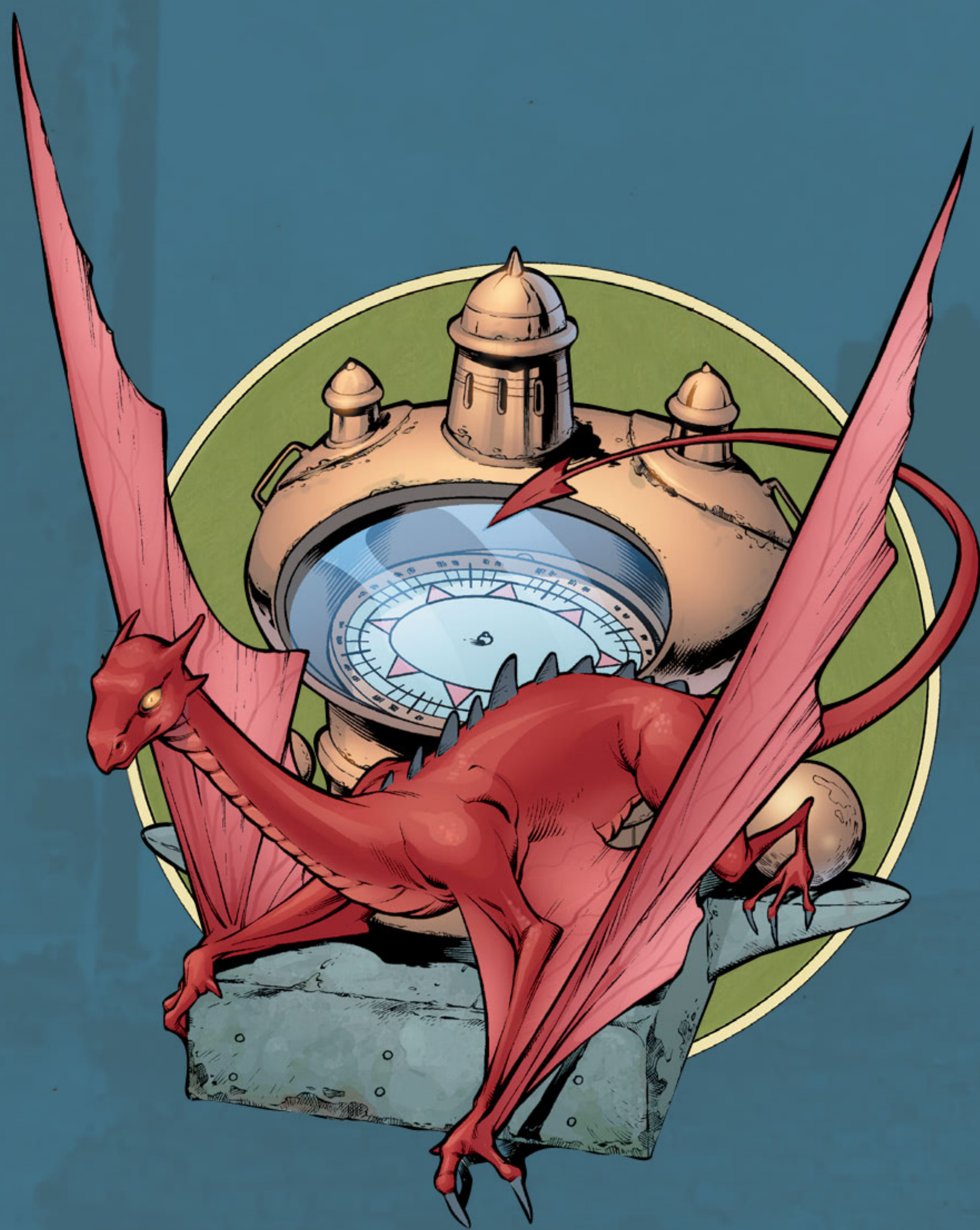
*I don't know what it'll be
like, or when it'll happen —*

*— but I hope we all get
a chance to find out.*

*And I hope that
chance comes soon.*

*Your friend,
Fletcher*





AFTERWORD

I hope you've enjoyed what you've just read. Or, if you're one of those people who reads the back-matter before the main act, let me gently suggest you read the story first and then come back here. What follows will make more sense that way.

And in any case, thanks for reading.



There are three main origins for *Arrowsmith: So Smart in Their Fine Uniforms*. The first, of course, is Carlos Pacheco, series artist and co-creator. We first worked together after Carlos was negotiating a new exclusive deal with Marvel Comics. He'd been drawing *X-Men*, but one of his contract requests was that he wanted to draw an Avengers project, and he wanted me to write it.

I was immensely flattered that such a terrific artist wanted to work with me, and after we'd been working together for a bit, even more flattered that when I suggested creating something together, he enthusiastically agreed. It's always a treat when amazing artists actually want to work with you.

Anyway, the project we'd been working on was *Avengers Forever*, and while I loved everything Carlos brought to it — relentless energy, enthusiasm and brilliant storytelling —

one piece of it I was utterly amazed by was his sense of visual worldbuilding. He'd told me he didn't want to redesign Kang, the time-traveling conqueror who was a major character, so much as make Kang's world look like the kind of world where a guy wearing a diving helmet, a blue face mask and pin-striped magenta hip boots was what a badass looked like. And he did — he gave Kang weapons full of inlays and filigree and a world that felt like an SF version of Louis XIV's France full of decoration and elegance, and the setting elevated Kang.

I definitely wanted any project we created to play to Carlos's design skills.

The second major point of inspiration was a *Final Fantasy* mini-series I wrote for Disney Comics, based on the video game, that was never published. You're not missing much; the mini-series wasn't that great. But there was an engineer named (I think) Cid, who was building these huge war machines in a world full of fantasy creatures and swords, and I loved that juxtaposition. So I'd been thinking of what else I might do with a series involving magical creatures and industrial technology.

And the third point was an idea I'd suggested to my friend Lawrence Watt-Evans, a fantasy author whose publishers had asked him for what was then known in the industry as a "big fat fantasy novel." I suggested that he do a fantasy-world version of World War I, where inexperienced young men were taught to fly and thrown into battle as quickly as possible, because the war needed bodies and didn't have time to make sure they were experienced. Maybe they were taught a few easy spells and sent to war. Lawrence reworked the concept completely, and wrote the very fine novel *Touched By the Gods*. But the idea stuck with me, in the context that I'd first imagined it, and I figured since what Lawrence had done was so different, I was free to use it anew...

So mix all that up with a healthy dose of J.C. Leyendecker, movies like *Dawn Patrol* and an essay I wrote on the origins of World War I for, all of places, *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles*, and we were off to the races. Carlos liked the ideas I threw at him, I liked the ideas he came back at me with, and it all coalesced into a series.

And now we're doing more, and we hope you'll like that, too. And that you'll like the extras we've prepared for you, starting on the next page...

— *Kurt Busiek*
November 2021



APPENDIX ONE

Dossier

TOP SECRET

It took a few years for our plan to co-create a project to reach fruition. *Arrowsmith* was originally conceived as a potential Gorilla Comics book in 2000, but when that venture didn't last, we came back to it when Carlos was asked to do a Cliffhanger book at DC-Wildstorm in 2003. What follows is the proposal we sent Scott Dunbier at Wildstorm, plus some of Carlos's design sketches...

—kdb



ARROWSMITH

QUICK-AND-DIRTY PRECIS FOR A NEW ONGOING SERIES CREATED BY BUSIEK & PACHECO

UP FRONT...

Arrowsmith is a series of fantasy and war, of magic and technology, and of action, intrigue and adventure set against a visually compelling background in which magical power and magical creatures are an integral part of World War I.

It is both a coming-of-age story and an end-of-innocence story, as a young man sheds his romantic illusions in the face of the horror of war, and a world experiences a shift in power. As an age of nobility ends and a modern, industrialized age begins – but no one sees it coming, and the ramifications of the change are disastrous.

It's a dangerous world of unstable alliances, of ancient, unleashed evil and of an arms race unchecked by conscience or morality. To survive will take a stout heart and consummate skill – but even those may not be enough to save the world.

And even if the “good guys” win, the world will be forever changed. But will it be for better ... or worse?



*Design sketch for Hilda,
Fletcher's dragonet*

THE WORLD

The world of *Arrowsmith* is a lot like our own, but for one major change. In this world, all the stuff of folklore and fairy tales are true — wizards, magic, trolls, dwarfs, elves, dragons and more. No actual gods greater than, say, the Celtic Sons of Don — the Greek or Norse gods are just too big — but all the other stuff of folklore, from spinning wheels that spin straw into gold to werewolves to trolls that hide under bridges and eat passersby.

But all that was centuries ago, and unlike in the fairy tales, we'd take a somewhat realistic view of how a world like that might develop. Magic exists, there are multiple intelligent races – and in 800 AD, Charlemagne made a pact with the high courts of the magical realms, opening the way to trade agreements, to political alliances and to open interaction between humanity and the magical races – some of the magical races, anyway. And since then, magic and magical beings have been a part of the world and its development.

So by the time of the opening of this series, it's 1915 or so, and we're in the middle of a magic-based Industrial Revolution. Technology is full of strange, new and wild-looking stuff, from clipper ships that sail the skies, supported by giant, clunky, turbine-like “gravity pumps” that pump all the gravity out of the hulls, to mass-produced amulets, spells of protection and more. Dragons haul trains along their tracks and immigrant trolls are be digging the subways of Manhattan.

Visually, the world is a mixture of the bustling brownstones-and-streetcars urban growth of the early Twentieth Century with dragons, magical machinery and a polyglot populace of humans and fantasy creatures, all mingling in a visually-compelling melting pot, so that even everyday street scenes would be arresting and involving. History ran somewhat differently than it did for us, so while we still have a United States, it's the United States of Columbia, and it only extends as far west as the Mississippi, the rest of the continent taken up by the countries of Tejas, Deseret, California, Newfoundland, Dakota, Acadia, Grand Florida and Mexico. And while Europe is very familiar, there are more countries (Gallia, Lotharingia, Prussia and Bavaria instead of merely France and Germany, for instance), with histories and royal lineages just as long and complex. And the treaties and marital ties and so



on between and among the rulers of these countries are *even more* complex than in our own history, thanks in part to the Treaty of Charlemagne making noble blood all the more powerful and respected.

It is a time of great forward-looking energy *and* of great tradition, permeated with the ideals of the past. An era of great romantic ideals, ancient noble houses and a burgeoning new technology no one quite understands the effect of.

And it's a time of war. Because World War I happens here just as it did for us — a war that explodes out of a minor conflict, drawing most of the western world into it through old treaties and ancient alliances. But for all that it's driven by the alliances and ties of the past, it's war fought with the new technologies, so nobody understands just how big and how destructive it's going to be. In short, like World War I, it's the last romantic war and the first modern war at the same time. Only with werewolves, dragons, sorcerers and bizarre and fantastic engines of destruction making it more visually-fascinating than World War I ever was.

The romantic “golden boys” of this war, like the biplane pilots of WWI, are the airmen — daring young wizards who've been trained in flying spells and little else. These wizards are able to manifest a glowing triangle around the soles of their boots that levitates them into the air and allows them to “skate” through the air, skimming and swooping through the clouds. And they don't look like what we think of when we think of wizards — no robes, no pointy hats, no beards. These are young men in leather flying jackets, helmets and goggles, with long silk scarfs fluttering around their necks, swooping and stunting unaided through the skies, firing bolts of destruction at each other and their targets on the ground. They seem impossibly heroic, dashing and romantic.

They also die like flies. At the start of the war, nobody was prepared, and these tyro fliers get maybe three weeks of sketchy magical training before they're hurled into the front lines, where they're desperately needed, but where most of them simply don't have the skills to survive. Their life expectancy is short — but oh, the thrill of flying, as long as they last — !



Above and left:
The Blood Emperor

OUR HERO

Our lead character would be Fletcher Arrowsmith, a young American, about 16 years old. He runs away from home, his head full of romance and dreams of glory, and lies about his age in order to sign up for flight training. He gets his pathetically-inadequate training and is plunged into the horrors of war too fast and too soon, left to live or die dependent on how fast he can smarten up.



*Fletcher's friend
Jonathan*

He's one of the ones who lives, naturally enough, and through his eyes we can see the whole sweep of the war and what it's doing to his world. He'll have the thrill of flying, but the constant nearness of death. He'll see the nobility of both sides respecting each other and acting like old-line lords while teenagers are dying face down in the churned-up mud below. He can go anywhere and do anything, going on dawn patrol missions, getting shot down and held prisoner, meeting the right princes and going on important undercover missions. He can be involved in anything from a romance with a Hemingway-esque Red Cross nurse to a desperate mission to stop an enemy sorcerer from using prisoners in a necromantic ceremony to bring back to life an elder demon and crush an allied advance to the first deployment of the sorcerous equivalent of mustard gas, or an attempt to recover the mystic power source needed to power the techno-magical equivalent of tanks. And more.



*Early design
sketch for Grace*

Arrowsmith will be a very adventurous series, full of wild visuals and a rich, involving context, but at the same time a bittersweet series, as romantic ideals like honor and courage are assailed by the cold reality of swift, bloody death. If our lead, and the world, cling too tightly to their romantic dreams, they'll be crushed underfoot by the new world that's coming. But if they don't hang onto at least some of it, they'll have lost their humanity.

THE TITLE

Just a note, to get it in somewhere: The series and the lead are called *Arrowsmith* mostly because I just like the resonance of the name; the idea of a man who makes arrows is itself an expression of the series themes. Making arrows is a technology, but it's a technology of the past, of a romantic time gone by. [And even "Fletcher" is another name for a maker of arrows.] That kind of dichotomy can pop up again

and again – our flight officers, for instance, will fire mass-manufactured mystic crossbow bolts, using a “modern” technology via an ancient weapon, showing once again the old clashing with the new.

THE SERIES

Arrowsmith would be an ongoing series published in story arcs, accommodating Carlos’s schedule needs rather than bringing in fill-in artists. We would plan it out in large enough story chunks to make attractive and satisfying trade paperbacks, and produce it on a schedule that can get those story arcs out on a monthly basis. Then the series would take a brief break until we’re far enough ahead to ensure on-time shipping of the next arc, and so on.



SOME THOUGHTS ON THE FIRST ARC

The first story arc in *Arrowsmith* would focus on introducing the world and themes of the series, and the core conflict at the heart of Fletcher – he wants to be a good man, but war drives even good men to unthinkable acts.

I see it playing out something like this:

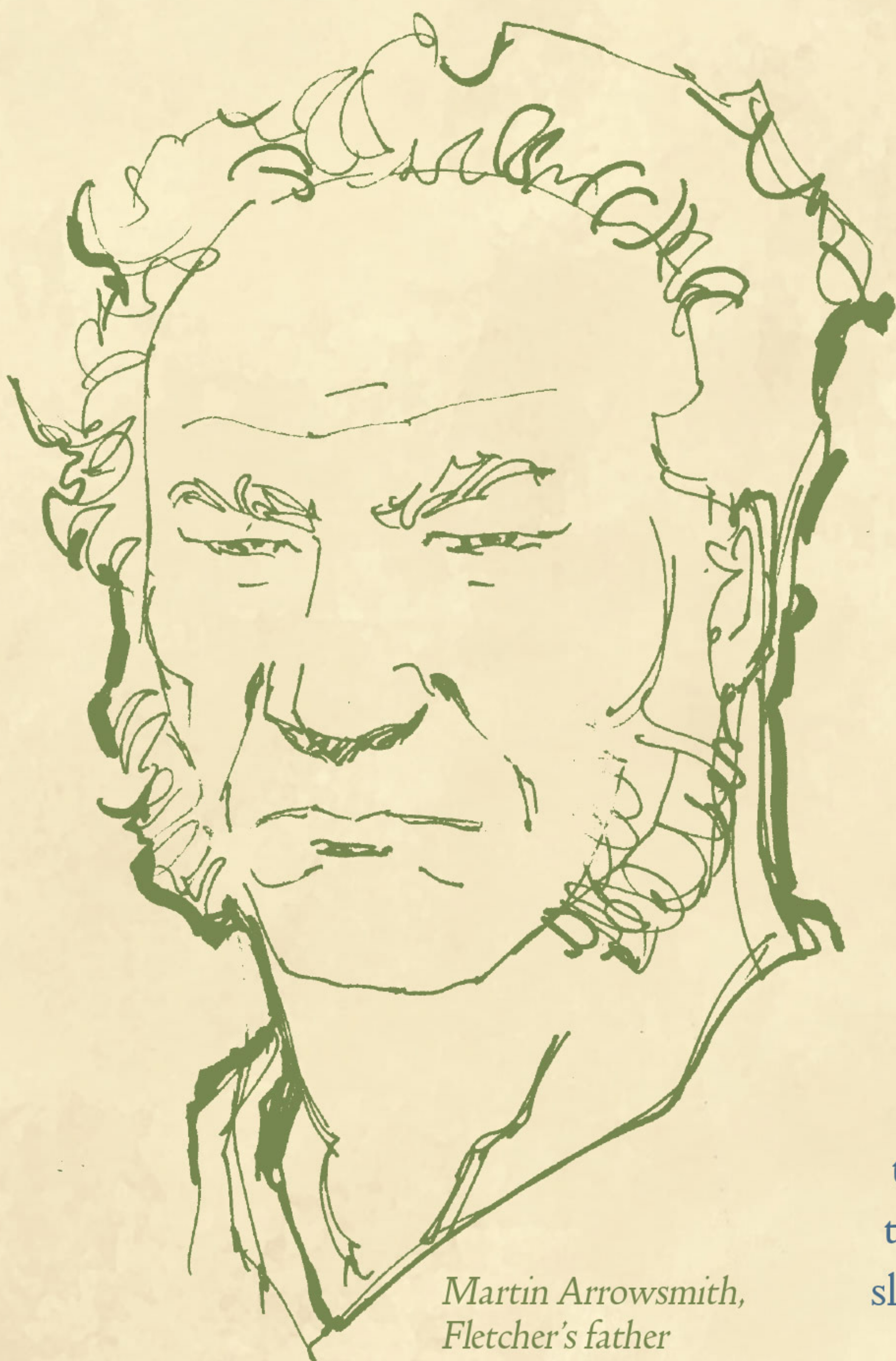
1 – We introduce the world situation and the bitter, bloody fighting in what we know as France. We meet Fletcher as he gets caught up in anti-Prussian propaganda and makes the decision to run away from home and join this world's version of the Lafayette Escadrille – American volunteers fighting under French command. By issue's end, we've established both Fletcher's dreams of nobility, honor and heroism, and the idea that things aren't likely to be the way he imagines them.

But he's signed up and off to New York, and they desperately need more airmen in the war...

2 – Fletcher's entry into the military and his inadequate training. We'll meet Fletcher's fellow trainees, most of whom are starry-eyed or hopeful in ways not unlike Fletcher, but rivalries, enmities and friendships will be born. We'll also meet the military wizard corps and plant the seeds of discovery that escalating technology is running the war but nobody's running the technology – it's out of anyone's hands by now. And we'll see the New York of this world in all its charm and glory, and Fletcher will meet a girl – the daughter of a wealthy New York family determined to do her part, so she's going “over there” as a volunteer ambulance driver. She and Fletcher are drawn to each other by their similar dreams –



Prussian ogre



*Martin Arrowsmith,
Fletcher's father*

— and over in Europe, the Kaiser, backed by the mysterious **[REDACTED]**, seems unstoppable.

3 – Fletcher's squadron is sent to France aboard ship. Very dashing, very upscale, very much a sendoff of noble young warriors. Fletcher gets to spend more time with his sweetheart. And under way, they're attacked by Prussian-sent sea-monsters and manage to defeat them, Fletcher getting valuable combat practice as he does so. They toast their victory with champagne in the moonlight, thinking this is just what it's supposed to be like.

They are, of course, horribly wrong.

They get to Europe, and are expecting official welcomes, orderly assignments and being eased into the war. But they don't get it. As soon as they arrive, they're rushed to the front, thrown into action and the slaughter begins.

4 – Fletcher survives.

His days are spent in combat or waiting for combat. He witnesses astonishing nobility and frightening brutality. He's in near-constant terror. But he survives. His sense are numbed, his dreams shattered, and he's reduced to an automaton, a fighting machine who kills not for honor, but for simple survival. He's in danger of losing his soul.

There's one fighter there who seems to have it all together, though, and that's the only thing that keeps the spark of Fletcher's dreams alive. He meets the girl again, similarly shell-shocked – and even friends from home – a troll who worked on his family's farm who was shamed into joining up to fight for his homeland by Fletcher's impassioned arguments – arguments Fletcher no longer has faith in.

But over at the Wizardry Corps they've got a new weapon to test – and even the people who created it are repulsed by it. And Fletcher's squadron is chosen to test it.

5 – The atrocity.

Fletcher is being prepared for a secret mission – the testing of the new weapon. He and his squad are shown evidence of Prussian atrocities, whipped into a frenzy of revenge by propaganda. But at the same time, his exposure to the Wizardry Corps lets him see that even these masters of the

mystic arts are dealing with very new technologies, from manufacturing to scale, and nobody knows the full repercussions of what they're doing. Some new device, a new understanding of an existing weapon or something — will make Fletcher realize that he and his fellows are being led by guesswork, by men who are out of their depth, not the wise nobles he'd thought.

And then Fletcher gets his first real taste of atrocity by helping commit one. The new weapon the wizards have come up with is a means of keeping salamanders (fire elementals) in vacuum bottles. They rig backpacks with a dozen or more of these, so a squad of airmen like Fletcher can firebomb a Prussian city. And they do — and Fletcher sees unarmed men, women and children burned alive as the attack goes out of control, with greater devastation than anyone had expected.

And during the atrocity, Fletcher sees the great spirits of the north — Cernunnos, and others who represent wildness and nature — turn their backs on humanity and leave this world in sorrow for what it has become.

The world has lost more than it may ever realize. And Fletcher has to come to terms with the fact that he helped make it happen.

6 — A shaken, shattered Fletcher is shot down in the wake of the firebombing mission, and he and the heroic airman of issue 4 have to make it back to base, though Fletcher, wounded and distraught, has lost his taste for war. He and the other airman join up with the ambulance-driver gal and the troll from back home, and it looks like they're going to make it —

— until they're ambushed by enemy forces — vampires, maybe — and the other airman nobly and willingly sacrifices himself to ensure the others' escape.

Fletcher and his girl find respite in each others' arms, but the act of love in the midst of death brings home to Fletcher





*Above and right:
Early designs for Fletcher*

a simple truth: Life goes on. He has to grow up — to realize that war isn't a matter of good guys in white and bad guys in black but of violence and anger and hateful acts from both sides. And war is bigger than any one person, too. If he quits and runs, nothing will stop — and the side he's on, for all that he's horrified by it, is the side fighting for freedom. So he's got to, literally, soldier on.

But the arc ends at the funeral of the airman who saved him, and Fletcher comes to see the ceremony for more than he did before; he sees it as an affirmation of life, of the necessity to pay in blood for what you believe in, and a thanks to those who've made that payment. It gives him a new perspective — a hope that there's something beyond the madness, a hope that lets him fight for a more mature, more seasoned ideal — and gives him a glimpse of the world to come, a world where something can be built out of the ashes of the old world destroying itself. He's growing up — as is the world around him.

That's a rough outline — I'm sure we'd find other ways of playing it out as we go. And a couple of those issues seem pretty tight so it might go seven issues rather than six. But that should give you an idea of what kind of opening arc we'd have.

BEYOND THAT —

- I think the next arc would be about Fletcher and a **[REDACTED]** (whom Fletcher is ready to think of as a useless fop) going on an undercover mission as prisoners of war in Prussia to find and stop a necromancer using POWs in unholy rites. This would get Fletcher closer to the kind of people who've been running the world and let him see through their eyes, at least for a bit — plus, it'd get him behind enemy lines, and able to see and interact with our main series villains.
- I want to send Fletcher off to Arabia, in search of a genie who not only represents power, but who knows secrets about **[REDACTED]**, the power behind the Kaiser.
- I want to send Fletcher in search of Atlantis, in hopes of recovering the power that permeates

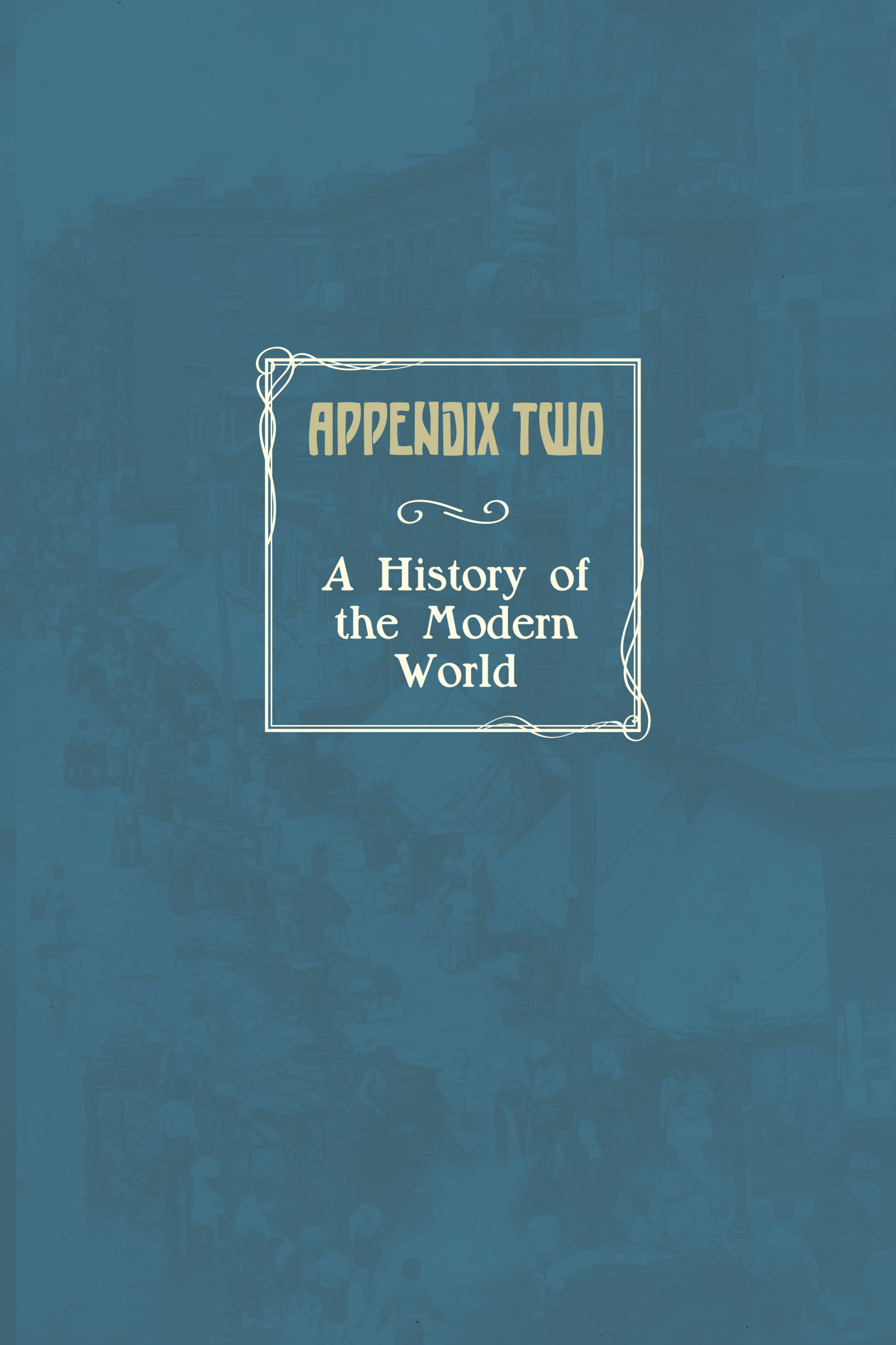
all magic and drives all of the war's weaponry. But it's also the power that destroyed Atlantis, and the arms race is proposing to unleash it again....!

And I'm sure there's more. Even if we run beyond the end of the war, there's the *Arrowsmith* equivalent of the Lost Generation and the Barnstorming Age or international intrigue and adventure in a world where the power base is shifting from nobility to industry. There's a world to explore. What's the magical equivalent of running with the bulls in Pamplona? Did the October Revolution happen in this world's equivalent of Russia? What's going on in Japan? On Easter Island? In the corridors of power of the magical beings?

There's adventure enough to fuel *Arrowsmith* for a long time to come.

More Fletcher!

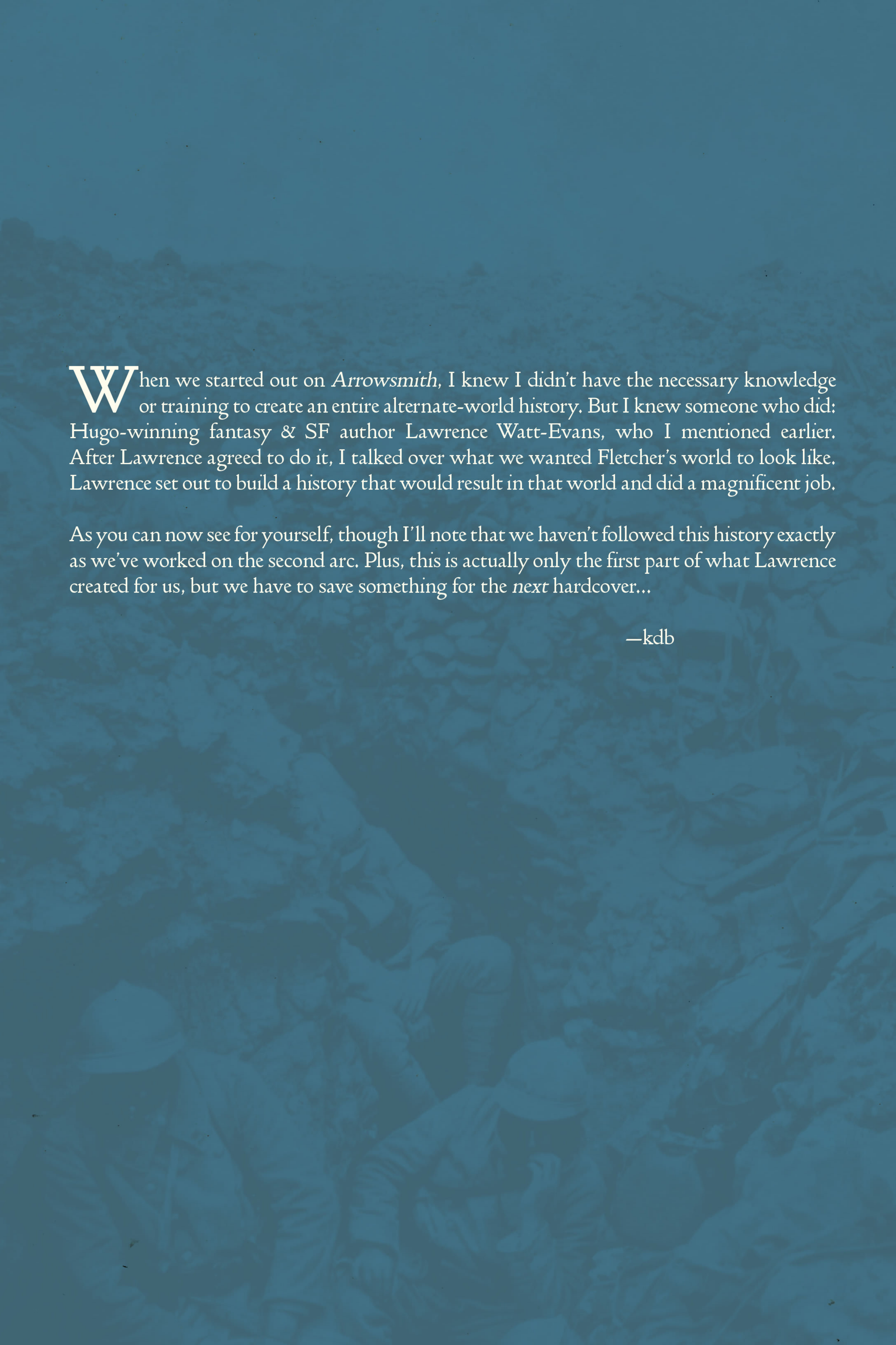




APPENDIX TWO

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A History of the Modern World



When we started out on *Arrowsmith*, I knew I didn't have the necessary knowledge or training to create an entire alternate-world history. But I knew someone who did: Hugo-winning fantasy & SF author Lawrence Watt-Evans, who I mentioned earlier. After Lawrence agreed to do it, I talked over what we wanted Fletcher's world to look like. Lawrence set out to build a history that would result in that world and did a magnificent job.

As you can now see for yourself, though I'll note that we haven't followed this history exactly as we've worked on the second arc. Plus, this is actually only the first part of what Lawrence created for us, but we have to save something for the next hardcover...

—kdb

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT FROM ATLANTIS TO THE PRESENT DAY

BY LAWRENCE WATT-EVANS

A PREFATORY NOTE

This is a brief history concentrating on the major political and historical developments that created the world Fletcher Arrowsmith will be adventuring in. The main intent is to keep the world exotic, adventurous, romantic in the classic sense and full of the kind of European alliances and dynasties that created World War I in the real world, but with enough altered names and borders to seem fantastic and different. To combine the appeal of fantasy and magic with the period appeal of *Titanic*-era culture, merged into a world where nothing is quite the same as the world we know. It's an old world — but new, too, at the same time.

There isn't much here on how magic works. But as a note on creatures: Three words we want to avoid in *Arrowsmith* are “elf,” “dwarf” and “fairy,” since they're so Disneyfied in much of the minds of the

audience. As such, we've given different names to those creatures and to Faerie itself. What we think of as elves and faeries call themselves the Lightborn, and come from a mystic realm called the Summer-Land or Summer Country, a legendary land in Welsh mythology. Their government is a complex parliamentary monarchy called the Seelie Court (drawn from Celtic myth), and they have alliances with the Earthborn, who we generally think of as dwarves. Trolls, goblins, kobolds, sprites and more all exist, as a part of all this, but use their traditional names. There are also classes called the Waterborn (selkies, kelpies, the mer-people) and the Flameborn; the only examples we know so far are salamanders (fire elementals) and dragons. The evil faerie creatures are the Darkborn, a class that includes vampires, werewolves and such. They're far more chaotic than the Lightborn, but have a rudimentary authority in the form of an Unseelie Court.

Onward...

ATLANTIS

Atlantis was a large island — not a continent, as some would have it, but a land somewhat larger than Asia Minor — beyond Gibraltar, in the Atlantic, not far beyond the horizon. At its peak, in the 17th century BC, its highest towers could sometimes be glimpsed from the coast of Lusitania on clear days. Its population was easily in the hundreds of thousands, perhaps in the millions.

Its name, which was later given to the ocean that covered it, derived from its first king, Atlas — “Atlantis” means “daughters of Atlas” in ancient Greek.

It was surrounded by an archipelago of other, much smaller islands. Three groups of these survived the sinking: the Azores, the Canaries and the Madeiras. (That gives us the location of the island — but not its capital city, which was somewhere on its southeastern coast — pretty exactly.)

Its civilization first arose around 2500 BC — not the 9500 Plato cites; he or his source multiplied the island’s 900-year history by a factor of ten.

Atlantean civilization didn’t rely on any technology we’re familiar with, but on magic — exactly what sort of magic isn’t known, but what little is recorded of Atlantis all agrees that it was a civilization built on preternatural forces. Extensive use was made of a mineral called orichalc — literally “mountain copper,” perhaps mined by gnomes or kobolds, and almost certainly magical in nature.

The Atlantean tongue, initially called Linear A by archeologists before its true provenance was recognized, has apparently been lost beyond all recovery — it was almost certainly not Indo-European and may not even have been human in origin.

The Atlanteans established colonies and trade routes on both sides of the Atlantic. In the west they built the walled city of Tulum on the Yucatan Peninsula and traded with the people whose distant descendants would be the Maya, Toltec, Olmec, etc. In the east they occupied the island of Crete and established a trading empire with the semi-barbaric tribes of the Aegean islands and coasts. They bypassed the Iberian and Italic peninsulas because the people there were simply too hostile and primitive to be worth dealing with, but traded with the Egyptians and Hittites.

However, they somehow angered several of their neighbors, and in the latter half of the 17th century BC they found themselves at war with an alliance of several ancient Hellenic tribes under the leadership of the Athenes, at least two different undersea races and quite likely with magical forces unknown to us.

In 1628 BC a magical weapon of unthinkable power was unleashed and Atlantis was sunk beneath the sea, its population drowned. A secondary blast took out the Cretan colony.

These explosions threw so much smoke and dust into the air that the skies were dark for weeks, resulting in crop failures and famines all over the world. Without supplies from the motherland, the colony at Tulum — and any other colonies that might have existed in the New World but are unknown to us — died out quickly; most of the Aegean colonies either starved, reverted to barbarism or surrendered to the Hellenes and were absorbed.

Crete itself, however, became a much smaller independent empire of its own, and as such survived another four centuries of gradual decline before its final collapse.

Whether the great destruction was the work of the enemies of Atlantis or a misfire of a device created by the Atlanteans themselves is not known. Modern-day theorists believe it may have been a version of Edison's manatron, constructed on a mammoth scale and with no provision for safely releasing excess energy, so that it became an immense explosive device -- but no modern nation could build a manatron capable of storing sufficient energy to sink a country the size of Atlantis. The exact nature of the "Atlantis device," or "A-bomb," remains a mystery.

AFTER ATLANTIS

The psychological after-effects of the Atlantean War were significant. In the magic-poor New World the sea, whence both the Atlanteans and their aquatic enemies had come, became a thing of terror and despair, so the Mayans never built fleets or seaports. In the Mediterranean it was magic that took the blame, and efforts at taming the arcane forces were looked upon with suspicion for the next two millennia. And in the undersea kingdoms...well, if there were any southerly undersea kingdoms they were apparently destroyed in the cataclysm. The northern kingdoms beneath the North Sea and the Irish Sea survived, but cut off contact with humanity for several centuries. It's from this period that the kelpie custom of luring people to their deaths by drowning dates; it may originally have been intended as a campaign of intimidation against any who might dare to follow in the footsteps of the Atlanteans.

As a result of the Atlantean aftermath the people of classical antiquity were surprisingly ignorant of and inept at magic and had almost no contact with the Lightborn or other eldritch tribes; thus the

empires of Phoenicia, Carthage, Greece and Rome rose and fell almost entirely according to human schemes. Many people came to disbelieve in magic entirely during this era.

However, that changed in the summer of 800 AD.

THE PACT OF CHARLEMAGNE

In that year Charlemagne, King of the Franks, went to Rome to settle disputes surrounding Pope Leo III, who had split from the Eastern Church (although the break was not formalized and made permanent until 1054). Leo declared the Byzantine Empire to no longer be the true successor to Rome, because of the ascension of the Empress Irene three years before. The Western Church and Western Empire did not recognize the legitimacy of Irene's claim to the throne, officially because a female could not rule. This wasn't necessarily purely sexism — Irene was, ah, emotionally unstable, and had deposed and blinded her own son to take the throne.

Charlemagne, who'd long been the Papacy's strongest supporter, took Leo's side, rescued him from the mob and established him in the Holy See. In exchange, on Christmas Day Leo crowned Charles as the new Roman Emperor, creating the Holy Roman Empire.

Charlemagne's empire at this point included most of the old Western Empire, as well as a lot of territory in Germany that the Romans never held, so it wasn't a completely outrageous claim.

Charlemagne then returned to his capital at Aachen, which is in Germany at the moment, on the Belgian border.

And in Arrowsmith's world he may have been met there by an ambassador of the Seelie Court. Recognizing the potential threat posed by Charlemagne's united control of both secular and sacred authority, the Summerlands wished to negotiate for a peaceful coexistence between Christendom and their own creatures.

(Or maybe it happened at the Synod of Aix-la-Chapelle, which took place just before Charlemagne went to Rome to pull Leo's fat out of the fire. The Synod reformed the Western Church under Charlemagne's direction.)

The treaty was made, establishing a policy of non-interference but also requiring the Lightborn to offer tribute to Charlemagne and his heirs, in the form of magic and counsel, every so often. Under the Pact, humans, the Lightborn, Earthborn and other signatories accept contracts made with the other species as binding. Creatures that reject the Pact would be cast out and anathematized.

And incidentally, Charlemagne and his heirs were recognized by the Summerlands and other creatures of the Pact as herze-kings, linked to the magic of the lands they rule. One interesting characteristic of herze-kings is that **[REDACTED]**. Prior to the Pact, herze-kings were very rare, since humans can't create the necessary magical linkage by themselves — Arthur of the Britons was one of only a few known cases. After the Pact, though, herze-kings became far more common.

The Pact put a temporary end to the Catholic Church treating the creatures of myth and folklore as pagan abominations — they aren't Christian and they are thought to have no souls, but they're bound by the Pact and must be tolerated. And they can be used.

As a result, the more lawful sort of magical creatures gravitated to Latin Catholic lands, and their absence allowed darker forces to become dominant in the supernatural spheres of Orthodox countries — though the Orthodox churches fought hard to suppress vampires, werewolves and the like.

In 814 Charlemagne apparently died, leaving his empire to his son Louis the Pious — although **[REDACTED]**.



THE THREE KINGDOMS

In 817 Louis the Pious shared power with his three sons, Lothar, Louis and Pepin (a.k.a. Charles II) — the older Louis and Lothar shared the rule of the empire, while Pepin received Aquitania in the west and the younger Louis Bavaria in the east.

In 840 Louis died **[REDACTED]**, leaving Lothar I the new emperor — but Lothar's brothers had other ideas, and went to war against him. In 843 the Treaty of Verdun split the empire into three kingdoms. In our history these new kingdoms were officially called West Francia, East Francia, and Middle Francia, and eventually become known as France, Lotharingia (or Lorraine), and Germany. Lothar kept the title of Emperor.

In Arrowsmith's world, Lothar had better counsel — as emperor he was advised by wizards and aided the creatures of magic, and while he didn't always heed that advice or use the aid effectively, he came out better than our version did. Lotharingia, the Middle Kingdom, remained the most powerful of the three. Charles II did not have the nerve to call himself King of the Franks, and besides, with the greater knowledge of magic it was commonly understood that

older names have power, since they've had time to settle into the slow consciousness of the land itself. So the Western Kingdom, instead of France, became known by its Roman name of Gallia.

In 855 Lothar I died. In our history he divided his empire among his three sons; in Arrowsmith's he did not.

In our history, after about fifty years of fragmentation, Lotharingia was absorbed by the Holy Roman Empire, which was basically German. In Arrowsmith's it remained an independent kingdom, and the King of Lotharingia held the title of Emperor. In both histories Germany began to fragment while nominally all paying allegiance to the Emperor.

In Arrowsmith's history, when the last Carolingian heir of Lotharingia died in 875 the crown passed to Norman invaders — specifically to Dirk (or Dietrich, or Theodoric) the First. (In our history, Dirk I, possibly the son of this one, was the founder of Holland, somewhat later — being able to usurp the Lotharingian throne aborted this.) The Pope and the rest of Christendom could hardly leave the title of “emperor” in such hands, so it was instead granted to Lewis of Germany. Charles II of Gallia, busy with his own problems at the time, did not contest this. Much of the southern portion of Lotharingia, including all the Italian territories, passed into Imperial hands, as the newly-installed and unwelcome Normans were not able to hold them.

The result is that the Holy Roman Empire evolved much as in our world, and Gallia evolved much as France did, but the Norman Kingdom of Lotharingia stayed wedged between them.



THE NORTHLANDS

Otherwise the Middle Ages happened much as in our world, especially in the east — the Byzantines and the Orthodox Church did not join the Pact. There were a few noteworthy changes, though.

The Normans of Normandy (as opposed to the Lotharingian Normans, who ruled the Duchy of Flanders in our history) conquered England and renamed it Albion — as conquerors they deliberately wanted to disrupt the land's magic so that the more established inhabitants couldn't use it against them. [“Albion” was Pliny's name for the place; it's hybrid Latin, from a Celtic root meaning “high place.”]

Despite the name change, the Celts still had more and better magic — even though they'd never been part of Charlemagne's empire, they'd signed onto the Pact enthusiastically at the first opportunity, while the Norsemen who were the Normans' ancestors had considered the use of magic unmanly. The Norman subjugation of Wales, Cornwall, Ireland and Man therefore went more slowly than in our world. To speed the effort, in the late 11th century and early 12th the Normans more or less allied themselves with two of the three Sea Kingdoms in the area — the kelpies, in the northern portion of the Irish Sea, and the selchies, in the North Sea. The mer-people, to the east of the selchies, have not signed the Pact and refused to get involved.

In practice, the kelpies and some of the selchies were as likely to drown lone Normans and Saxons as their supposed Celtic targets — they couldn't be bothered to notice differences between one bunch of humans and another. They did, however, learn to tell apart the flags that ships flew, and left Norman ships alone while preying on Celtic ones.

The Welsh and Irish retaliated by allying themselves with hobs, pookahs and the like, so that while the Normans/English/Albionese had the magical advantage at sea, the Celts were the more dangerous on land.

THE SEA TRIBES

This brought the three sea tribes into the circle of European politics, so to address them:

All are shapeshifters that can breathe either air or water.

Kelpies can take the form of horses, oddly enough, or of handsome young humans, and can talk in either form. They choose which form; it's not determined by environment. Their kingdom lies in the deepest part of the North Channel between Hibernia (Ireland) and Scotia (Scotland); the Mull of Kintyre overlooks the northern end of their primary territory and the Mull of Galloway the southern, though individual kelpies wander freely up into the Hebrides or down to the Isle of Man. Kelpies are untrustworthy even for magical beings — they're nominally bound by the Pact, but any individual kelpie may well break it and regret it later. They're almost completely amoral. They're socially quite primitive, choosing their kings by acclamation and then deposing them at whim, with no government other than these kings. They're prone to infatuations, whims and piques, but have short attention spans. Any sort of alliance with kelpies is going to break down quickly; on the other hand, they're easy to bribe for specific errands, if the errands are simple enough that they can be carried out before the kelpie gets distracted or bored. While they're fairly adventurous and explore ashore often, they don't like to stay on land too long. In horse

form they can move supernaturally fast and carry much larger burdens than natural horses, but can't be trusted to stay on land; in human form they can be hideously ugly or stunningly beautiful — sometimes both at once, to different people — and have the power to seduce the unwary. They're partially immune to mortal weapons, and don't age — like the Lightborn, they can apparently live forever.

There aren't very many kelpies. This is probably a good thing. The exact number might only be in the hundreds.

Selchies or silkies are seals when in the sea, human on land — they have no voluntary control over this. "On land" is defined as having any portion exposed to air while any other portion is touching the ground — thus they can't swim as humans and can't wade as seals. Their lands extend around the entire north of Scotland, from Islay to the Isle of May, and across the North Sea to the coast of Norway. Usually they mind their own business, but they have no particular objection to dealing with humans. They're far more intelligent and trustworthy than kelpies. In addition to shapeshifting, they have the gift of prophecy, but are reluctant to use it since it usually comes at a high cost — often their prophecies, which tend to be unpleasant, become self-fulfilling. They can sometimes work other spells, usually bindings of various sorts, but they don't have and can't provide any sort of protection against mortal weapons. They tend to be fatalistic and mysterious and clearly don't think quite like humans. They live longer than humans, perhaps two or three times as long.

There are at least thousands of selchies, probably tens of thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands.

The mer-people are your classic half-human/half-fish folk. They know spells that can transform them into humans,

either temporarily or permanently — the permanent spells aren't reversible and the temporary ones always have a pre-determined limit which can't be adjusted once set — but they don't like to use them, since these spells are difficult and costly.

Their lands are in the eastern North Sea and the shallow waters around Denmark and the lower Baltic; they don't go north of Gotland much because it's too cold.

Traditionally, they want little to do with humans, but they're as intelligent and varied as people, and think like people, where the selchies and kelpies are alien. This means any individual merman or mermaid might have his or her own ideas about dealing with people. As non-signatories to the Pact they are officially shunned, but the mer aren't allies with the Darkborn either, and go their own way. Humans and the mer may make individual bargains, and like bargains with other humans, whether they'll be honored or not is up to the individuals involved.

There are between two or three million mer-people in their kingdom, and individuals or groups might turn up almost anywhere — though they can't swim more than a day or two without resting on the sea bottom and can't live more than a mile or so below the surface — so ordinarily you won't find them in really deep water or too far from European coasts.

They live perhaps a time and a half as long as humans, or a little more — a merman is old at 100, ancient at 150, and long dead by 200.

A part of the Sea Kingdom (the mer-people ignore their less-human western relatives and call their land the Sea Kingdom) was a member of the Hanseatic League from 1229 to 1490; that faction signed the Pact. Otherwise, the mer have stayed out of political entanglements.

BARBAROSSA

In 1152 Frederick Barbarossa of the House of Hohenstauffen von Weiblingen, Duke of Swabia and King of Bavaria, became Emperor at about the age of twenty-nine — his father Conrad III had been elected to the title but never crowned. (Frederick's mother was a Bavarian princess; Conrad was Duke of Swabia only.) Barbarossa was a fierce and powerful ruler who feuded spectacularly with Pope Alexander III, fighting several wars in Italy before eventually making peace. He then sailed off on the Third Crusade and was allegedly drowned in the River Saleph in Cilicia (southern Turkey).



PRUSSIA

In 1230 AD, the Polish prince, Conrad of Mazovia, hired a military order called the Teutonic Knights to fight the pagan Prussians. (Yes, really.) The Teutonic Knights were not nice people — they were thrown out of the Holy Land — but they were tough and smart; they escaped Prince Conrad's control and wound up ruling Prussia themselves by 1295. **[REDACTED]**



MUSCOVY

It was in the 14th century in our history that the Muscovites started calling themselves Russians; in reality the original Russians, who'd ruled from their capital at Kiev, had been wiped out by the Mongols in the 13th century. This name change was a fairly successful attempt to claim a position as heirs to that great destroyed Christian nation and assert Moscow's primacy over the eastern Slavs.

In Arrowsmith's history the Muscovites, for magical reasons, stayed Muscovites.

EARLY PROTESTANTISM

The first stirrings of the Protestant Reformation began in the late 14th century, as various people got fed up with the Church. It wasn't just that the church was corrupt and materialistic — it pretty much always had been. It was more that the church was ineffective in dealing with the Plague and the huge economic changes taking place at the time. Heresies had been popping up all along, often taking the form of popular rebellion against the church's domination, but in the aftermath of the Plague — the huge labor shortage, the morbid concern with salvation in the face of so much death and so on — the church and the feudal states were no longer able to suppress them as effectively.

The Lollards were an English movement opposing the Church; one of their major complaints was the use of ritual, superstition and magic, rather than pure Christian faith. They did subversive things like translating the Bible from Latin into English, and were therefore wiped out by the Crown and Church working in concert.

In Arrowsmith's world the King and Church were aided by the Lightborn, who liked dealing openly with humans, rather than being considered creatures of Satan as they were in Orthodox lands. The Albionese Church thereby wound up permanently allied to the Lightborn, and the peasants of Albion were mistrustful of magic.

It was in Bohemia that Protestantism really got going, though. The Hussites established their own national church which the Catholic Church was unable to suppress.

More on this anon; first some geopolitical issues.

IBERIA

In our history, Spain was united by the marriage of Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon. However, Ferdinand apparently only came to the throne as the result of poisonings and disputed successions — not his doing, but he was the eventual beneficiary. Isabella took the throne because her niece, the rightful heir, was excluded. She should have married someone other than Ferdinand — an unwanted suitor who died on the way to the wedding. In Arrowsmith's world these events ran differently — Ferdinand's half-brother Charles was treated with a unicorn's horn and recovered from his poisoning, and Isabella's niece, whose claim had been disputed because of alleged bastardy, was magically shown beyond question to be Henry IV's daughter. Isabella was married off to her suitor, Pedro Giron, who avoided his fatal accident thanks to a seer's warning, and dropped out of history.

Therefore, Spain was never united, and Iberia instead still consists of Lusitania (Portugal), Navarre, Castile, Aragon and the tiny enclave of Grenada, speaking respectively Portugese, Basque, Castilian (virtually identical to our Spanish, the language of trade throughout the peninsula), Catalan and Moorish (a blend of Spanish and Arabic). Lusitania, Navarre, Castile and Aragon are Christian; Grenada is Moslem-ruled but has a large Jewish population. The four Christian kingdoms are closely related, their royal families multiply intermarried, but still distinct — Aragon is a constitutional monarchy with a strong king and a long tradition of internal solidarity and cooperation, the richest of them because

of its emphasis on sea trade; Castile, by far the largest, is agriculturally based, and is run by a constantly-squabbling, intrigue-riddled hereditary nobility; Navarre, by far the smallest of the Christian kingdoms, is relatively insular, backward and peaceful, with a constitutional monarchy and a weak monarch.

The Province of León is not a factor; it was conquered and absorbed by Castile before Isabella's reign, somewhere between 1140 and 1360.

It was Charles I of Aragon who gave Cristoforo Colombo three ships and the title of Admiral, and Aragon that colonized Cuba and much of the Caribbean -- but it was Castile that produced Balboa, Cortes and Pizarro (all three were from the same province, Extremadura, in Castile) and conquered the Spanish Main (well, the Atlantean Main) from Mexico to Tierra del Fuego. The papal rulings of 1493 and 1494, dividing spheres of influence in the New World, made it a three-way split -- besides the east-west split between Castile and Portugal/Lusitania, everything north of 20°N. latitude was assigned to Aragon. This didn't stick any better in Arrowsmith's world than in ours -- Castile still got Mexico south of the Rio Grande, and Aragon nabbed some islands south of the line -- but it was a general guideline.

North America was named Columbia in honor of Columbus, but Castile and Portugal weren't about to name South America after someone working for Aragon, and instead called it Nueva Atlantida -- New Atlantis.

Amerigo Vespucci, who explored the South American coast in 1499 and 1501, didn't get his name attached to either; it's not immediately clear why not. Perhaps he ran afoul of something magical in the Amazon basin.

Portugal/Lusitania still managed to claim Brazil.

Navarre, being landlocked, never colonized the New World.

The Castilian Inquisition, incidentally, sent many Jews and heretics fleeing into the religiously-tolerant Aragon.



EASTERN DEVELOPMENTS

In the east, in our world, in 1472, Pope Paul II had his ward Zoe, the last Byzantine princess, married to the widowed Ivan III (the Great) of Muscovy-called-Russia, in hopes of cementing an alliance against the Turks. In so doing he handed Ivan a gigantic amount of prestige, establishing Muscovy's claim to be the heir of Byzantium; it was this that first allowed the Muscovite princes to claim the title "Tsar," and gave them the authority to expand into Novgorod, Poland-Lithuania, and the Khanate of the Golden Horde, creating the Russian Empire.

In Arrowsmith's world Princess Zoe consulted a seer and refused to go, on the grounds that her married life would be miserable, spent in perpetual conflict with her stepson's family over the succession. Pope Paul, after similar consultation, decided not to press the matter on the grounds that the alliance against the Turks wouldn't work out. As a result Muscovy never asserted itself, and European Russia remained divided into Novgorod, Muscovy, Crimea, Kazania, Astrakhan and the Khanate of the Golden Horde. Those last four, collectively Tatarstan or Tartaria, affiliated and eventually joined forces to become the Golden Khanates.

Novgorod is the mysterious Forest Kingdom in the far north, extending north and east from the vicinity of St. Petersburg (which was never built).

Muscovy is the area around Moscow, from Smolensk in the west almost to Nizhni Novgorod in the east.

Crimea is the peninsula in the Black Sea.

Kazania lies east of Muscovy, extending to the Urals.

Astrakhan includes the Caucasus and the lands around the northern half of the Caspian Sea.

The former Khanate of the Golden Horde, later renamed the Central Khanate, is surrounded by Muscovy to the north, Kazania to the east, Astrakhan to the southeast and Crimea to the southwest.

It's possible that Zoe then married someone interesting like a Prince of the Summerlands, giving the Lightborn a claim to the mantle of Rome.

That brings us into the sixteenth century and back to the founding of Protestantism.



PROTESTANTISM II: THIS TIME IT'S THE REFORMATION

In 1517 Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the Wittenberg church — except that in Arrowsmith's world there were 99. The additional four denounced the Catholic Church's dealings with dark powers consequent to the “unholy Pact” of Charlemagne.

In 1529 the Lutheran princes filed the formal Protest at the Second Diet of Speyer that gives Protestantism its name.

Also in 1529, Henry VIII began the process of pulling Albion out of the Roman church, completed in 1534. The Ten Articles of 1536 and the Six Articles of 1539 that established Anglican doctrine were, in Arrowsmith's world, the Twelve Articles and the Seven Articles, and included an affirmation of the Pact of Charlemagne. The Church of Albion began and remained, with only occasional lapses, on good terms with the Lightborn and magicians of all sorts.

Protestant sects proliferated hugely. Lutheran and Calvinist churches declared all magic to be demonic in nature; the Anabaptists and later the Mennonites distinguished between godly and ungodly magic, but assumed “ungodly” to be the default and most magic to be a snare and a delusion. On the other hand, mystical sects — Denckians, Franckians, and Schwenkfeldians — embraced magic. (These are real sects; I believe they're all extinct in our world, but they probably survive in Arrowsmith's.)

During this unrest there was an odd proliferation of powerful magicians — Paracelsus (Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, 1493-1541), Faust (Georgius Sabellicus Faustus Junior, died 1541) and others.

The loss of Bohemia, Germany and Albion prompted the Catholic Church under Paul III (pope, 1534-1549) to continue and expand the reforms begun in the 14th century, a process that continued through the final Council of Trent in 1563. The Council of Trent repudiated the Pact of Charlemagne, more or less agreeing with Luther and Calvin that magic was the work of the Devil, and the Society of the

Cross, founded in 1540 and already serving as the Church's secret police, was charged with stamping out unauthorized magic throughout the Catholic world. Crux agents traveled everywhere, teaching, arguing and often bringing the Inquisition.

One difference between the Catholic and Protestant attitudes, though, was that the Church's own magic — transubstantiation, absolution, miracles — remained acceptable; it was creatures of magic and natural magic that were repudiated. In Protestant countries, on the other hand, most churches would have nothing to do with this "high magic," which smacked of popery — salvation was dependent upon faith, not miracles — but low magic often gained a tacit acceptance despite the warnings of Calvin and Luther.

Note that Lotharingia remained Catholic, as did Gallia, Poland, Bavaria, Tyrolia and all the Iberian kingdoms.



TYROLIA

Tyrolia, you ask? Yes, Tyrolia. In our world the Austrian empire pretty much began when the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I, of the House of Habsburg, King of Rome, managed to pull together various treaties and marriages during the period 1490-1526, winding up as nominal ruler of Bohemia, Hungary, Tyrolia, Milan and Burgundy, in addition to Rome. (His son married his way onto the Spanish throne, but we'll ignore that.) By the end of the Thirty Years' War in 1648 his descendant Ferdinand III had simplified this mess down to Austria, Styria, Tyrolia, Bohemia, Hungary, some pieces of northern Italy and whatever lands could be taken from the Turks — a fairly cohesive chunk of real estate. Burgundy had become "the

Spanish Netherlands" and had gone to the Spanish branch when Charles V split the family holdings.

The name Austria means "eastland." In German it's Oesterreich, "eastern empire," which is closer to accurate. It was originally the eastern part of the Holy Roman Empire.

In Arrowsmith's world, where Spain never united and the Norman kingdom of Lotharingia still existed, the western branch of the Habsburg empire never existed, so there was no reason to emphasize the eastern aspect.

Furthermore, in 1529 the Ottoman Turks, under Suleiman II, captured Wien, the capital of the Archduchy of Austria, with the aid of a force of djinni, forcing the Habsburgs to retreat to a temporary capital at Innsbruck, in Tyrolia. (Prague might seem to make more sense, but they assumed it would be the Turks' next target, and besides, they were good Catholics and Prague wasn't very welcoming to Catholics just then. Salzburg might also seem to make sense, but the Archbishopric of Salzburg was independent at the time, and not available to them.)

Therefore, the Habsburgs chose to call their combined lands Tyrolia, and the name stuck even after they recaptured Wien in 1531. (Suleiman II had lost control of the djinni by then. Magic is tricky stuff.)



THE NEW WORLD

The European powers of the sixteenth and seventeenth century colonized the New World of Columbia and New Atlantis, of course. New Atlantis wasn't very different from South America — Portugese Brasil, Castilian Peru, New Castile (our Greater

Colombia, now Colombia, Venezuela, and Panama), Castilian Mexico.

Aragon settled Florida, Cuba, Hispaniola, Puerto Rico, etc. Gallia established their colonies at Montreal and Quebec in their territory of Acadia. Lotharingia settled New Amsterdam and Sint Maarten and the like, but put more energy into the East Indies, Hindustan (India), and Zuidland (Australia).

And Albion set colonies in Virginia, Carolina and New Albion, and turned the Hudson Bay Company loose in Prince Rupert's Land.



EMPIRE BUILDING

The colonial/imperial period of the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries ran very much like our own history, for the most part — the Turks retreated before the Tyrolian advance, Britannia and Gallia expanded their empires and so on. Castile filled the role of Spain, basically, with Aragon snatching bits and pieces — Navarre never amounted to much and Grenada sank deeper into decadence. In the east, Novgorod remained a sleeping giant in the north, more involved with its own internal matters and recurring border wars with Muscovy than the outside world; propelled by its people's fondness for magic and distaste for its Muscovite enemies, it drifted from its nominal Orthodoxy into a sort of semi-paganism.

Muscovy and the Khanates alternated between fighting each other and joining forces against Turkish expansion. The Khanates formed a federation, an elective monarchy ruled by the Great Khan, in self-defense against the Muscovites and Turks — though they sometimes joined

the Turks in fighting Muscovy, as well. Muscovy expanded significantly, but never approached the size of our Russia.

This in turn meant that the Great Northern War of 1700-1721 and the subsequent Partition of Poland didn't happen. Sweden remained a major power, controlling Finland, Ingria and Livonia.

Prussia expanded under the Hohenzollerns, just as in our world — except for the presence of a mysterious adviser every so often, so that they were actually slightly more successful in the west.

Louisiana was claimed by the Gauls, New Orleans was established in 1717 and then the entire territory was ceded to Aragon by secret treaty in 1769 — just as in our world, except it was France and Spain, rather than Gallia and Aragon.

However, a major difference resulted from the fact that Spain was never united, and the throne of Castile was in a different branch of the old royal family rather than winding up occupied by the western Habsburgs — the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714) didn't happen. This means that the British didn't take the Maritime Provinces of Canada from the French, and the Gallic territory of Acadia-Canada stayed entirely Gallic. It also means that the Duchy of Savoy didn't become the Kingdom of Sardinia. Which may seem trivial but it affects eventual Italian unification, or the lack thereof.

It was the War of the Spanish Succession that established France and Britain as the two great powers of Europe; without it, matters remain more diffuse. Without that or the Great Northern War...well, there would have been wars, but we'll assume they didn't really make major permanent changes.

The War of Jenkins' Ear began in 1739, between Albion and Castile, and led into the Wars of the Austrian Succession. No change there.

The Seven Years' War, known in North America as the French and Indian War, also took place, but the British didn't fare quite so well; they took the Northwest Territories and Newfoundland from Gallia, but not all of Acadia-Canada. And because the Spanish participant was Castile, not Aragon, Florida was unaffected.

One minor difference is that in 1764 George III settled the dispute between New York and New Hampshire differently, and gave Vermont to New Hampshire.



THE ERA OF REVOLUTIONS

The Columbian Revolution took place in 1776-1783, but the colonial victory was somewhat more decisive than in our world, due to the lesser British presence in Canada. Columbia is a bit feistier right from the start.

In 1789, when the Gallic Revolution started, Columbian agents incited Acadia-Canada into full-fledged rebellion against their Old World masters as well. In 1793 the Jacobins, busy with their own more urgent concerns in Europe, made a deal — independence in exchange for Acadia-Canada's agreement to stay the hell out of European wars, renounce all claims on property in Gallia or Lotharingia (where revolution had also broken out), and make a cash payment. Later Gallic governments occasionally tried to renege on this agreement, only to run into ferocious Columbian opposition that convinced them to drop the matter.

As in our world, the French Revolution triggered others: the Batavian Republic in

Lotharingia, the Polish Republic in Poland-Lithuania, and a few years later rebellions all through the continents of Columbia and New Atlantis.

The existence of the Polish Republic resulted in the partitioning of Poland in our world; in Arrowsmith's, with the absence of Imperial Russia, this process didn't occur. Prussia and Tyrolia grabbed chunks of Polish territory but the country didn't disappear off the map.

The division of Castile and Aragon and the stronger Columbia resulted in the first round of revolutions in the New World succeeding, where they were suppressed in our world; thus the Republic of Mexico and the Republic of La Plata (Argentina) gained independence in 1810, and the United Provinces of New Atlantis (Central America), the Republic of New Castile (Greater Columbia) and Paraguay in 1811.

And in 1811 (just as in our world) there was a slave uprising in New Orleans in 1811. Unlike our world, this one used voodoo to achieve its goal, acquiring the name the Voodoo Rebellion, and 5,000 slaves successfully escaped to the west, where they joined forces with the Indios and other revolutionaries and founded the Republic of Tejas. The border between Mexico and Tejas was set just south of Tampico, on the Rio Panuco.

Uruguay became independent in 1814, Chile in 1816, the Coastal Republics (Tacna, Arica, Tarapaca, and Atacama, which are parts of Chile and Peru in our world) in 1818, Florida (which includes the entire Gulf Coast to the Red River) in 1819, Peru in 1821, Brasil in 1822 and Bolivia in 1825.

In 1822 Denmark Vesey, a slave in South Carolina, organized a slave revolt. In our world he was betrayed by two of his fellow slaves and was hanged, the whole

thing aborted; in Arrowsmith's world the two did not betray him, and he and his army of 9,000 were able to start an uprising that spread all through the South. The freed slaves then headed west to join their compatriots in Tejas, and the Columbian Congress outlawed slavery — not really so much out of moral indignation as because the uprising had demonstrated how dangerous it was to keep unwilling workers around.

MONROE'S DOCTRINE & NON-MANIFEST DESTINY

In 1823, after the signing of a peace treaty between Columbia and Tejas, the presidents of Columbia, Acadia-Canada, Tejas and Florida issued a joint statement of the Monroe Doctrine, named after the Columbian president who wrote it, telling the European powers that meddling in the affairs of the New World was no longer welcome.

In 1826, probably inspired by the Monroe Doctrine, Florida and Haiti (independent since 1801) invaded still-Aragonese Cuba, setting off a new round of rebellions and creating the League of Grand Florida, which took control of most of the Caribbean — though Jamaica stayed in Albionese hands.

In 1836 the Tejas-Mexican War resulted in the independence of California — a somewhat larger California than ours.

The Oregon Territory was not seriously disputed in Arrowsmith's world — Russia and the U.S. couldn't get at it and British Canada didn't exist (though the Hudson's Bay Company's territory of Rupert's Land did), so only Castile, expanding northward from Mexico, had really pushed a claim. As

a result, California extended from slightly south of Mazatlan to 54x40' north latitude.

Tejas also expanded to the north. However, a big swath of the west remained in the undisputed possession of the Native tribes, particularly the Sioux, who organized the Nation of Dakota.

In 1847 the Mormons, fleeing Nauvoo, Virginia under the leadership of Brigham Young, crossed Tejas to found Salt Lake City and established the theocratic Kingdom of Deseret — which never had any king other than God, but the Mormons liked the sound of it. The name Deseret, by the way, is from the Book of Mormon and means the land of the honeybee.

54x40' was the negotiated southern border of the territory of the Hudson's Bay Company, which had officially been called Rupert's Land. In 1867 Newfoundland was granted dominion status within the British Empire, and this territory, extending from Baffin Island to the Bering Strait, was put under Newfoundlander administration, completing the map of the Columbian continent.

MEANWHILE, BACK IN EUROPE

Meanwhile, back in Europe, the Gallic Revolution followed roughly the same path as the French Revolution, save that it was Napoleon's march to Novgorod, rather than Moscow, that ended in (magically-induced) disaster.

In 1815 the Congress of Wien redrew the map of Europe, reinstating most of the pre-Revolutionary borders. Polonia (Poland) was not annexed by Russia, however, since Russia didn't exist. The united kingdom of Sweden and Norway — which had not lost

Finland, Courland or Livonia — took the name Scania, since much less than half of it was actually Sweden. The Kingdom of the Two Sicilies adopted the name Naples for convenience.

In our world, Italy was mostly united by the House of Savoy, the kings of Sardinia, in 1859-1860. Here, because Savoy never became the Kingdom of Sardinia (in fact, Sardinia itself was part of Aragon), that didn't happen. Instead Italy remained divided between Naples in the south and Tuscany-Savoy in the northwest. The northeast, which had once been the Republic of Venice, was Tyrolian. The Papal States, except for the city of Rome itself, were ceded to Tuscany-Savoy or Naples — largely to keep them out of Tyrolian hands.

In our world, Prussia united the German Empire with a series of three wars in the period 1864-1870. In Arrowsmith's world the first two wars, against Denmark and Tyrolia, went as they did for us, but the third war, the Franco-Prussian War, was averted — likely due to magical intervention. The Second Empire never fell in Gallia, and upon the death of Napoleon III in 1873 his son Napoleon IV became Emperor at the tender age of seventeen.

As for Prussia, the other two wars had united all of northern Germany under Prussian rule, but the southern kingdoms of Bavaria and Baden-Wurttemberg remained independent. Prussia negotiated a border-straightening agreement whereby Hohenzollern itself (which had no connection to Prussia) was ceded to Baden-Wurttemberg in exchange for Darmstadt.

In the Balkans the Ottoman Empire gradually crumbled away; much of the territory lost went to the Tyrolian Empire (which underwent some internal upheaval and became Tyrolia-Hungary), but Hellas (1821), Montenegro (1860), Bulgaria (1878),

Wallachia (1856) and Serbia (1817) became independent kingdoms.

Albania and Macedonia remained Turkish until 1913 in both worlds; the Third Balkan War, which took them away from Turkey, did not occur.



THE WIDER WORLD

Moving elsewhere for a moment: Africa and Asia developed much as in our world, save that north Asia was not annexed by the Russian Empire; instead the western portion remained in the Mongol hands of the Golden Khanates, while the east was taken by the empire of Cathay under the Manchu dynasty. The Gallic hold on Annam (French Indochina) was somewhat more tenuous, and Castile may have taken the Philippines.



MAGIC IN A BOTTLE

Edison invents the manatron, ushering in the age of industrial magic. This, along with other magical developments, remains to be explored.



THE COLUMBIAN ALLIANCE

There was a war, around the time of the real-world Spanish-American War, in which Castile attempts to retake Mexico — and Columbia, Florida, Tejas and California enforced the Monroe Doctrine. The end result: Stronger alliances between Columbian nations (although Mexico feels pushed around, and isn't part of it), California winds up with the Philippines and

a bunch of Columbian soldiers get wartime experience. It's possible that this was the first war where industrial magic played a part, but nobody yet understood the full ramifications of a large-scale magical war.



ALLIES AND ADVERSARIES

Returning to Europe: Gallia and Lotharingia have been allies since Napoleon's day; Bavaria, wary of Prussia, is also allied with Gallia. Baden-Wurttemberg, entranced by the notion of pan-German unity, is allied with Prussia and Tyrolia-Hungary.

Serbia and Muscovy are allies, bound by their common Slav/Orthodox heritage and hatred of the Turks. Serbia has also made an alliance with Gallia. Wallachia does not trust Serbia or Muscovy but has also allied itself with Gallia.

Scania has a loose alliance with Prussia, probably in hopes of picking up some territory from Polonia or Novgorod when Prussia turns its attention eastward, as the Scanian king thinks it eventually must. Polonia has a mutual defense treaty with Lotharingia and is negotiating with Albion.

Novgorod is wavering and has not chosen sides.

And so on.

Serbia is displeased by the 1908 annexation of Bosnia by Tyrolia-Hungary, Tyrolia-Hungary's trade sanctions on pork and the continued independence of Montenegro, and when Archduke Franz Ferdinand pays a visit to Sarajevo in 1914, he gets assassinated and chaos erupts.

And in Connecticut, in the United States of Columbia, on the shores of Lake Erie, a boy named Fletcher Arrowsmith is growing up with dreams of adventure...



APPENDIX THREE

Cover Gallery



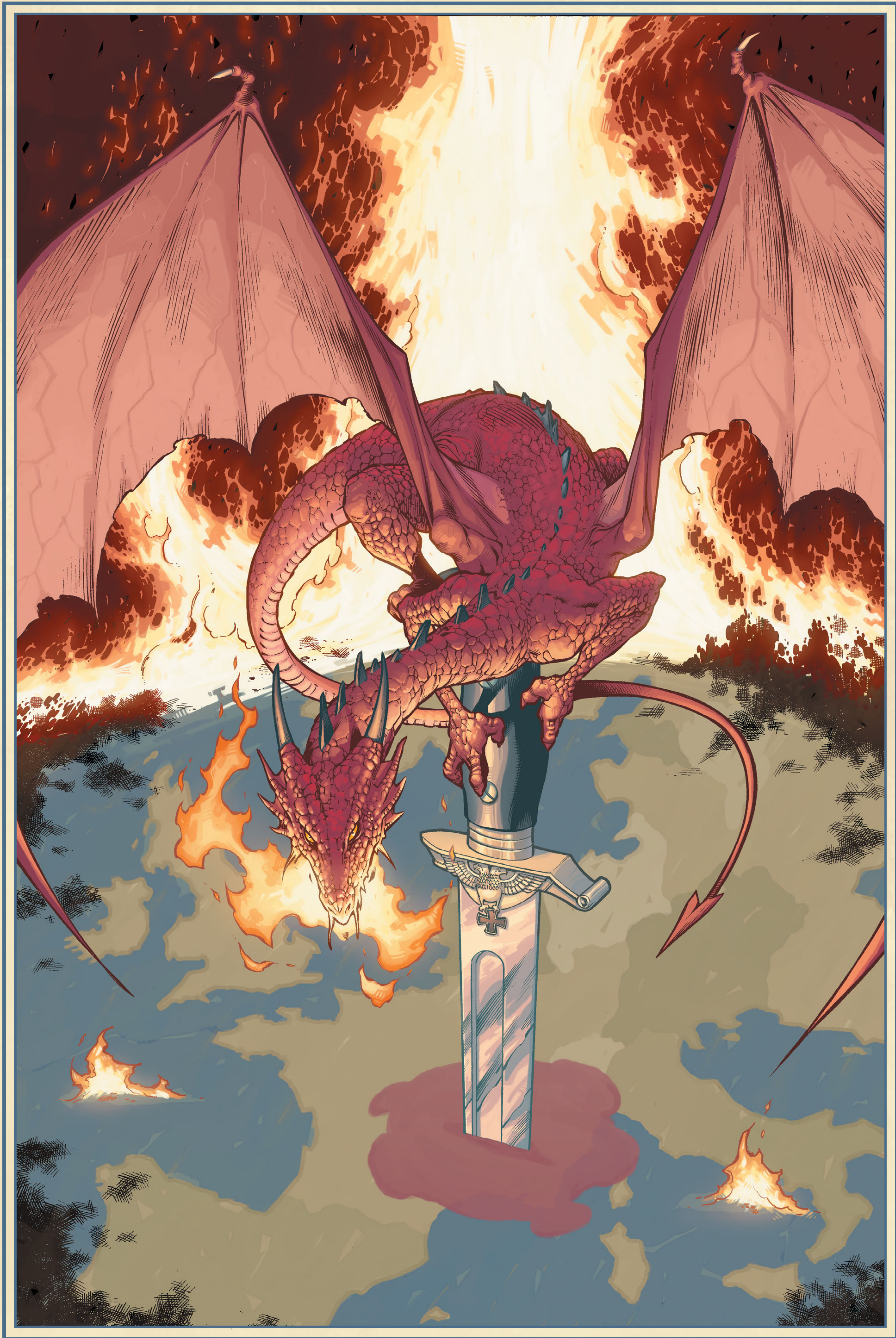
What follows are the covers for the Arrowsmith side of the *Astro City/Arrowsmith: The Flip Book* (which ran the 8-page Prelude to the series) and *Arrowsmith 1-6*. The cover art to the 2004 trade paperback collection can be found on page 2, as a part of our title spread.

All are by Carlos Pacheco, Jesús Merino and Alex Sinclair.

—kdb



ASTRO CITY/ARROWSMITH: THE FLIP BOOK



ARROWSMITH ISSUE 1



ARROWSMITH ISSUE 2



ARROWSMITH ISSUE 3



ARROWSMITH ISSUE 4

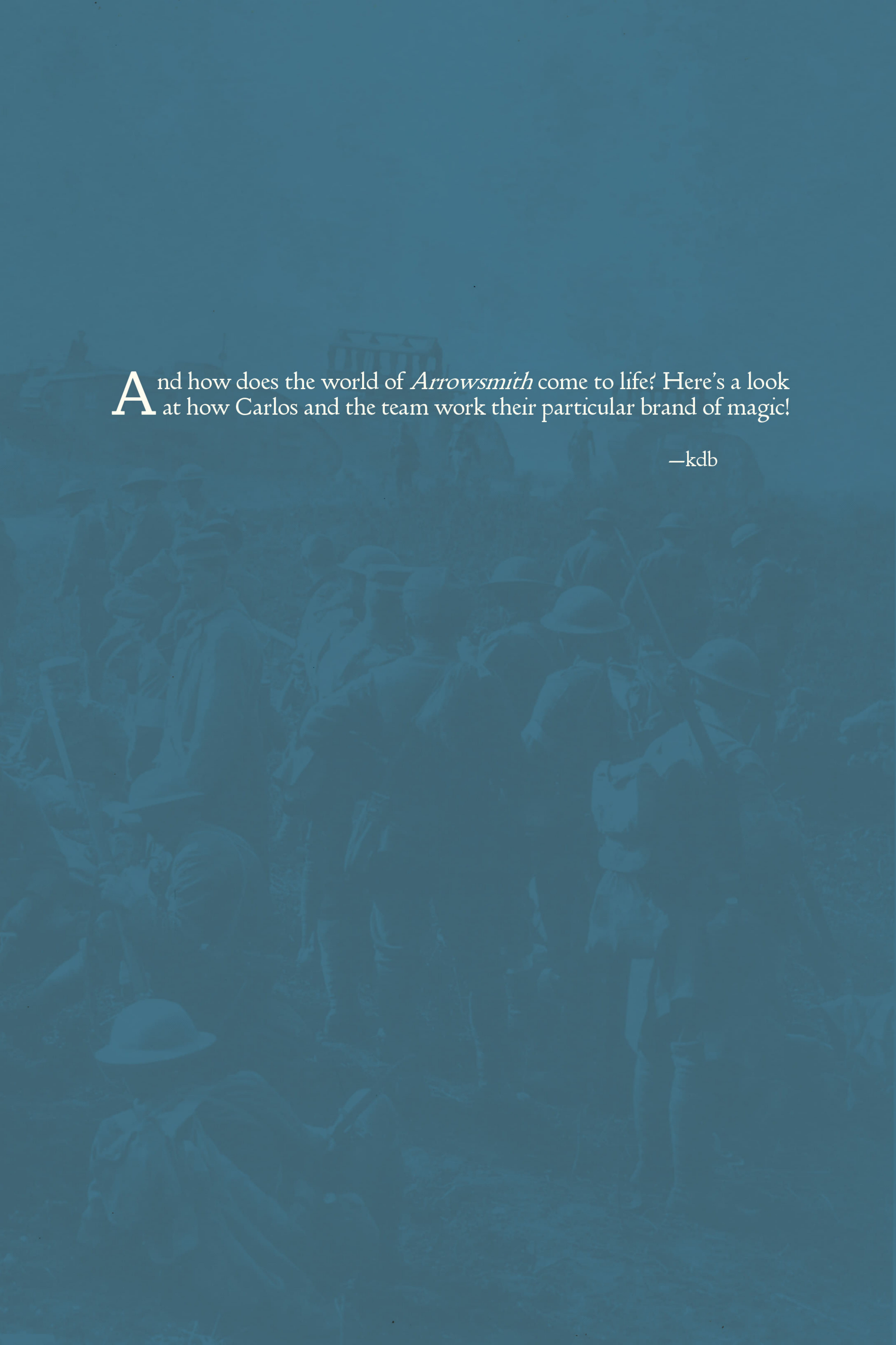


ARROWSMITH ISSUE 5



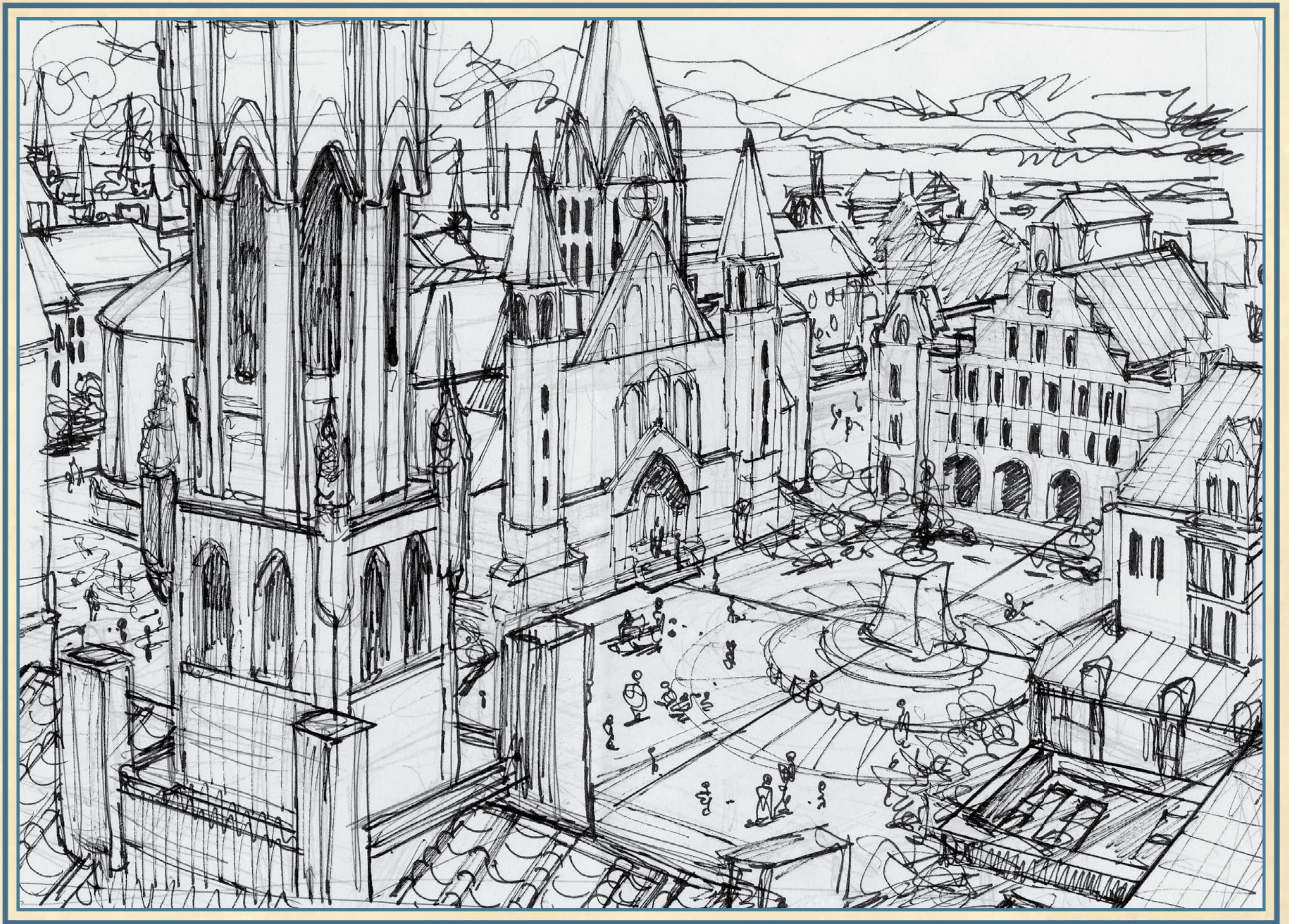
APPENDIX FOUR

Wizardry in
Line and
Color

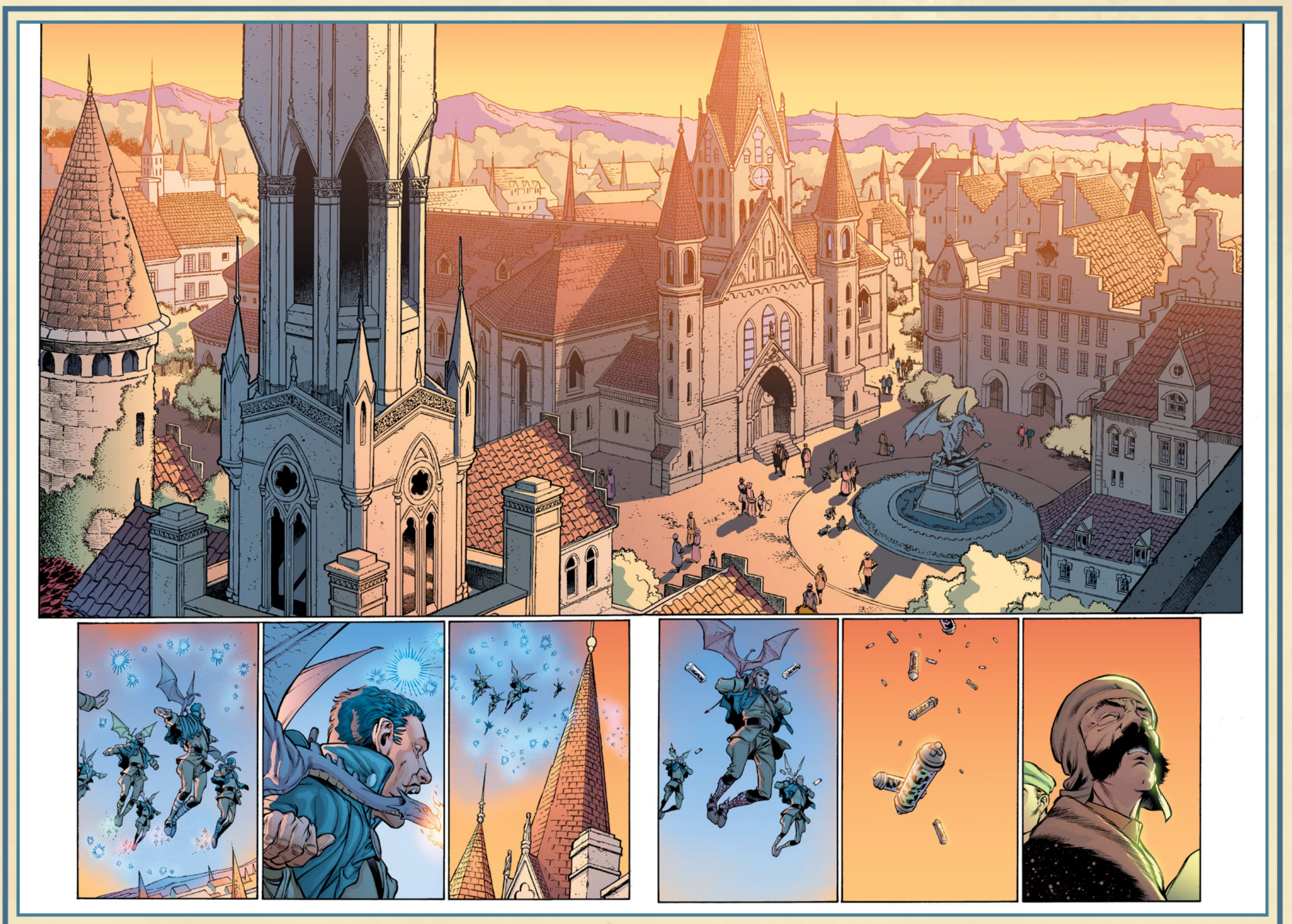


And how does the world of *Arrowsmith* come to life? Here's a look at how Carlos and the team work their particular brand of magic!

—kdb



Location design sketch by Carlos, finished spread by Carlos, Jesus and Alex.



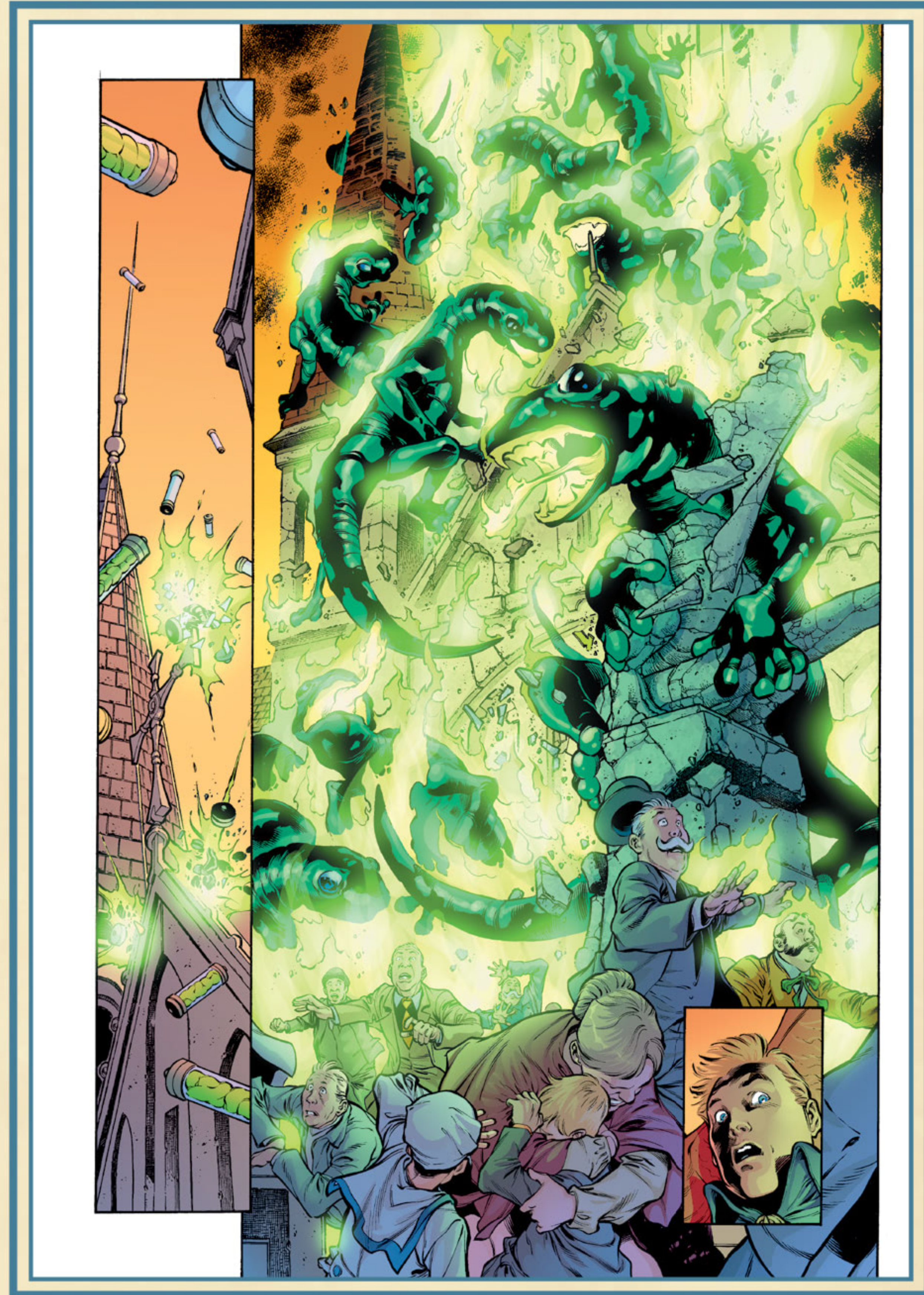


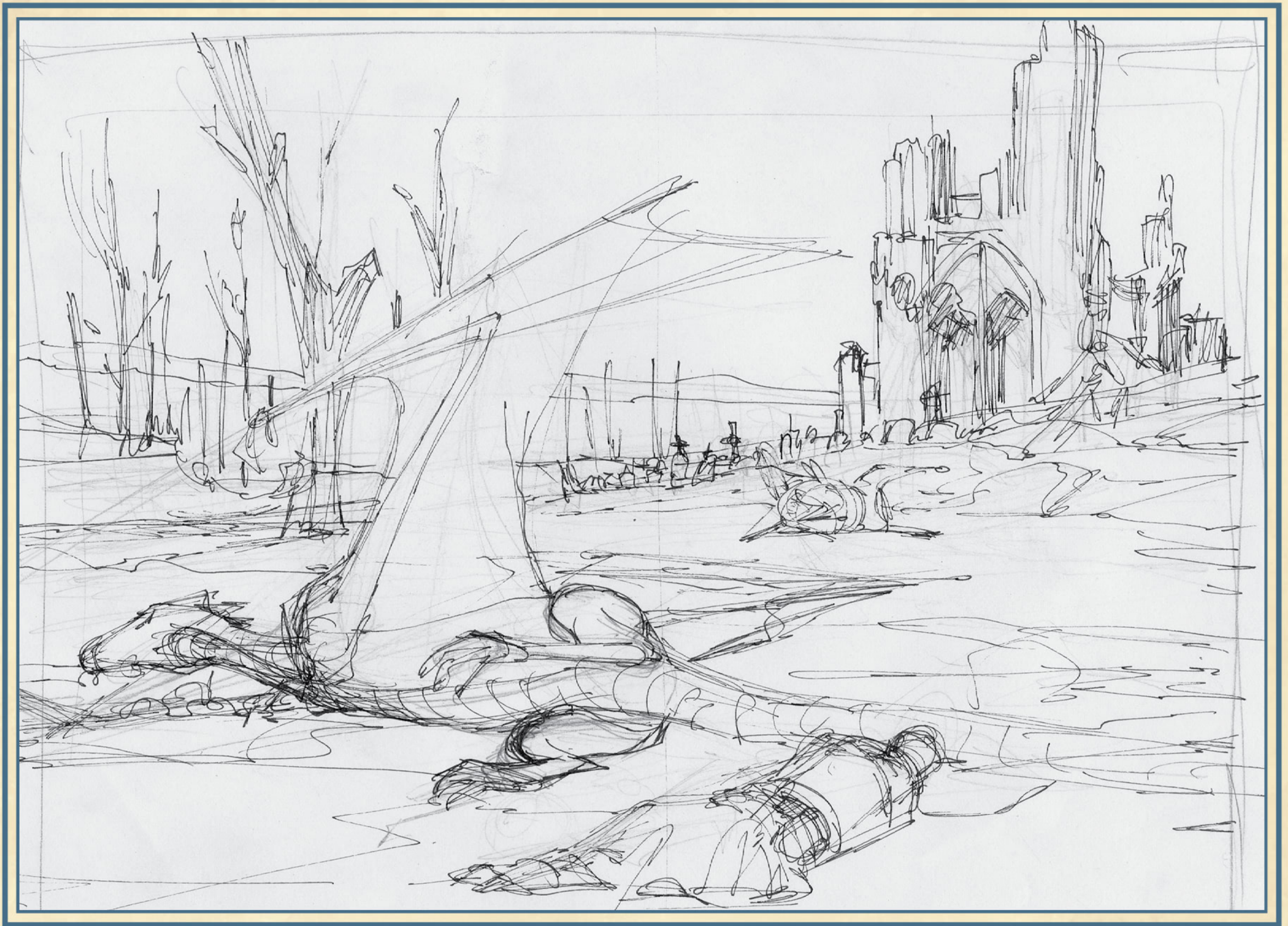
Storytelling roughs by Carlos, finished art by Carlos, Jesús and Alex.



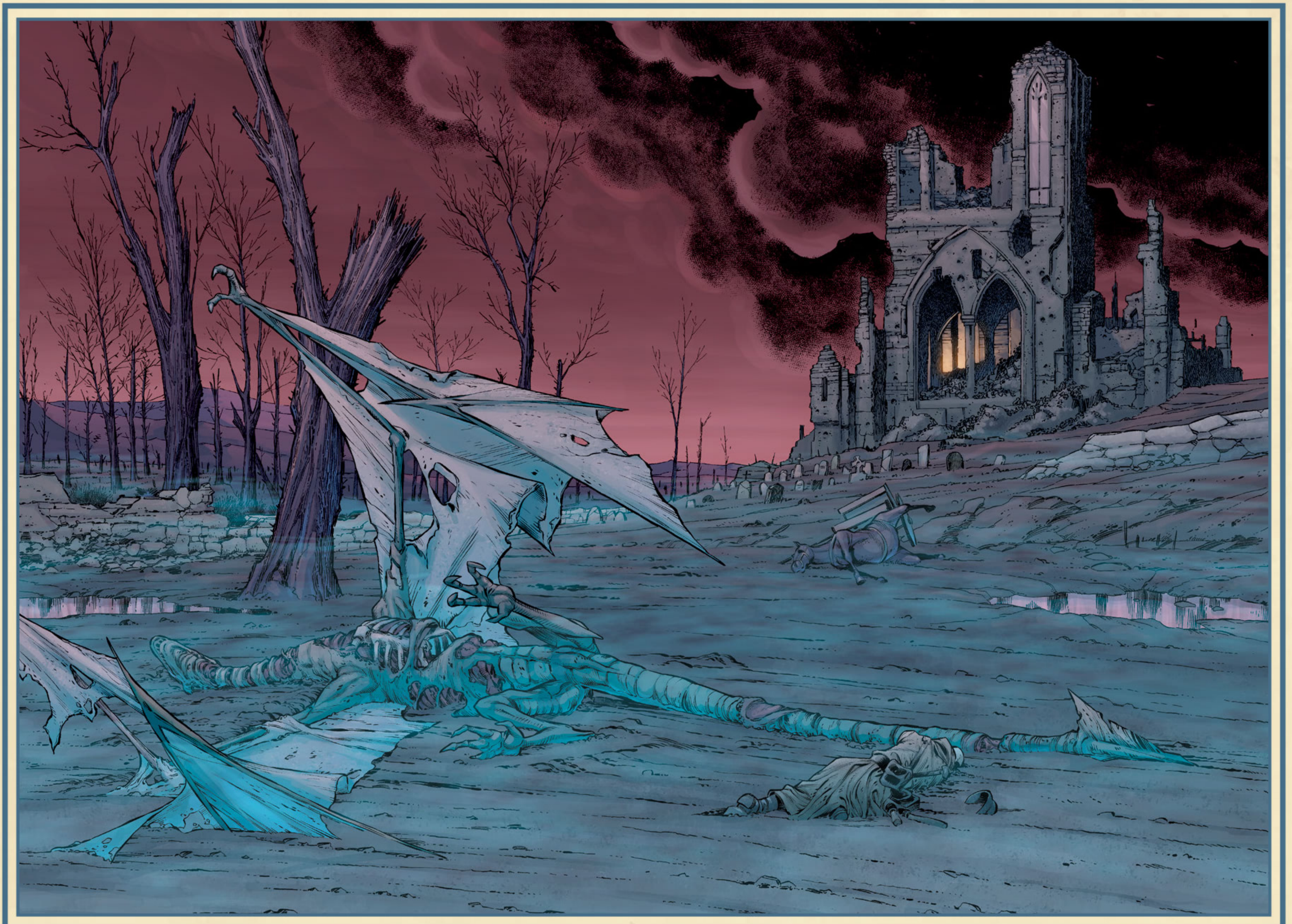


Pencils by Carlos, finished art by Carlos, Jesús and Alex.





Location design sketch by Carlos, finished spread by Carlos, Jesús and Alex.



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ABOUT THE CREATORS

KURT BUSIEK is the New York Times bestselling and Eisner Award-winning writer of celebrated runs on *Avengers*, *Superman* (with Pacheco) and more, including the breakout hit *Marvels*, and the co-creator of *Astro City*, *Autumnlands* and *Thunderbolts*, among others. He lives in the Portland, Oregon area with his wife Ann and their children Dan and Kat.

CARLOS PACHECO is an internationally-successful artist, working in Spain, England and the United States. Coming to prominence for his work on *Dark Guard*, *Flash*, *Fantastic Four* and others, he's perhaps best known for *Avengers Forever* (with Busiek), *Green Lantern* and *X-Men*, and has co-created the series *Iberia Inc.* and *Triada Vértice*. He makes his home in San Roque, Spain.

JESÚS MERINO began his career working for the Spanish publisher Planeta DeAgostini, and has penciled or inked many series at Marvel and DC, including *Avengers Forever*, *Superman*, *JSA*, *Superman/Batman* and more.

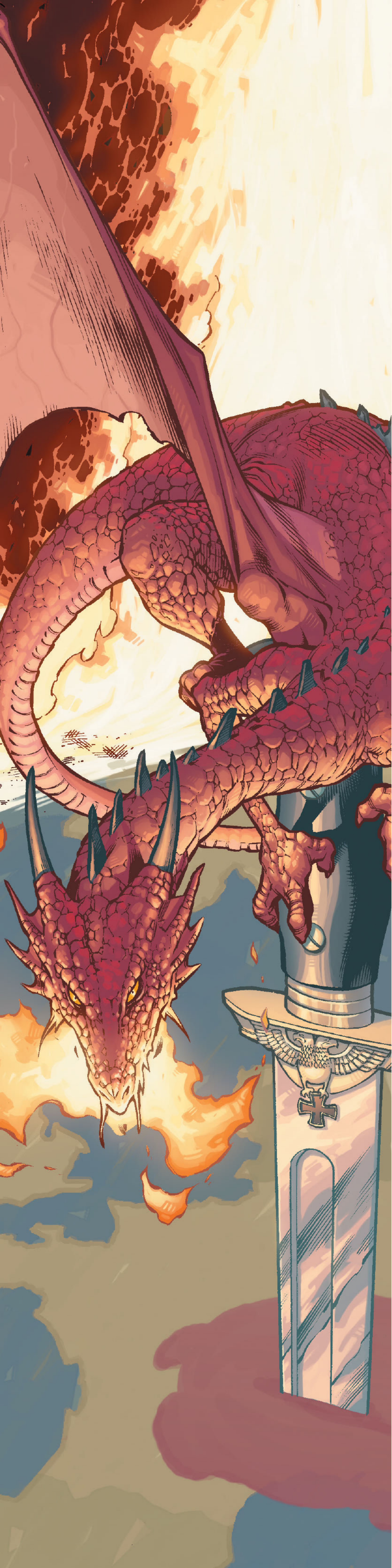
ALEX SINCLAIR broke in to comics at Wildstorm Productions, where he became known for his award-winning color work over Jim Lee & Scott Williams. He's since colored virtually every character at DC Comics and many at Marvel, and has had a long run on *Astro City* (with Busiek).

COMICRAFT is an award-winning design and lettering studio founded by Richard Starkings in 1992. Its work has appeared in a wide variety of comics from *Avengers* to *X-Men*, as well as television, movies and video games. Tyler Smith lives and works in Chattanooga, Tennessee.









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